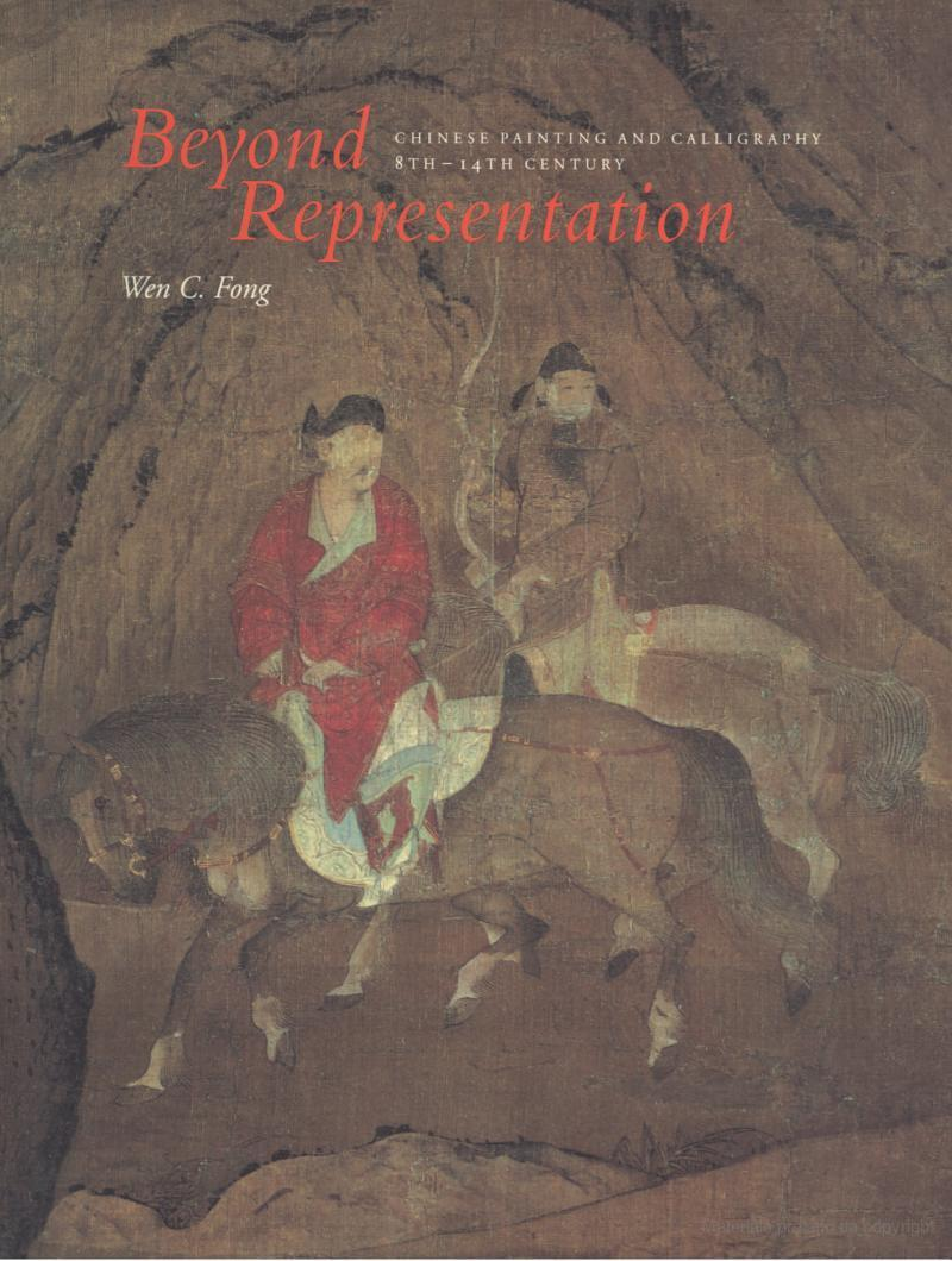
Beyond Representation

CHINESE PAINTING AND CALLIGRAPHY
8TH–14TH CENTURY

Wen C. Fong



Beyond
Representation

PRINCETON MONOGRAPHS
IN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
XLVIII

Not being fish, how do we know their happiness?
We can only take an idea and make it into a painting.
To probe the subtleties of the ordinary,
We must describe the indescribable.

Inscription on *The Pleasures of Fishes* (pl. 83),
by Chou Tung-ch'ing (active late 13th century)



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WEN C. FONG

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW HAVEN AND LONDON

This publication is made possible by The Dillon Fund.

Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
John P. O'Neill, Editor in Chief
Emily Walter, Editor
Bruce Campbell, Designer
Gwen Roginsky and Susan Chun, Production
Jean Wagner, Bibliographer

Color photography by Malcolm Varon

Maps by Wilhelmina Reyinga-Amrhein

Type set in Adobe Garamond by U.S. Lithograph, typographers, New York
Printed on Biberist demi-matte, 150 gsm
Color separations and printing by
Offset-litho Jean Genoud, S.A., Lausanne, Switzerland
Bound by Mayer et Soutter, S.A., Lausanne, Switzerland

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Fong, Wen.
Beyond representation: Chinese painting and calligraphy, 8th–14th century / Wen C. Fong.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0–87099–543–6 (MMA).–ISBN 0–300–05701–6 (Yale)
1. Painting, Chinese–T'ang-Five dynasties, 618–960. 2. Painting, Chinese–Sung-Yüan dynasties, 960–1368. 3. Calligraphy, Chinese-History–T'ang-Five dynasties, 618–960. 4. Calligraphy, Chinese-History–Sung-Yüan dynasties, 960–1368. I. Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.) II. Title.
ND1043.3F66 1992
759.951'09'02–dc20 92-1089
CIP

Jacket illustration: Unidentified artist (mid-12th century), *Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Flight to Shu*, detail (pl. 3)

Frontispiece: Chou Tung-ch'ing (active late 13th century), *The Pleasures of Fishes*, dated 1291, detail (pl. 83)

To Constance

and to our beloved children
Laurence, Peter, Serena

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Foreword

This volume represents Professor Wen Fong's presentation of a history of early Chinese painting and calligraphy from the T'ang, Sung, and Yüan dynasties (eighth through fourteenth centuries) based on a selection of masterworks in the Douglas Dillon Galleries at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. A companion volume, presenting a catalogue raisonné with documentation of the Museum's entire holdings in early Chinese scroll and album painting and calligraphy is currently being written by Associate Curator Maxwell K. Hearn. We hope that eventually two additional volumes will appear to complete the publication of the Museum's equally distinguished collections of later Chinese painting and calligraphy through the Ming and Ch'ing periods.

The dramatic transformation of the Museum's holdings in Chinese painting and calligraphy, one of the world's great artistic traditions, from one that was, to say the least, less than adequate in the early 1970s to one of great eminence two decades later was, by any standard, a remarkable feat. It was in large measure the result of the passionate enthusiasm and generosity of one great benefactor, the Honorable C. Douglas Dillon, President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1970 to 1983 of this institution. In his relentless pursuit of the finest Chinese paintings, Douglas Dillon and, by extension, the Metropolitan, was guided by the genial author of the present volume, Professor Wen C. Fong, Consultative Chairman, Douglas Dillon Curator of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, Department of Asian Art. Beginning with the acquisition of twenty-five Sung and Yüan paintings from the noted collector C. C. Wang in 1973, Mr. Dillon and the Dillon Fund have pursued their interest in building the collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy at the Museum by making continued substantial contributions, including the purchases of a selection of the Edward Elliott Family collection in the late 1970s and of a group of works from the Wango H. C. Weng collection in 1988. Since the opening of the Museum's Astor Garden Court and the Douglas Dillon Galleries in June 1981, the response among collectors in Chinese painting and calligraphy has been most enthusiastic. Major gifts and pledges of

gifts from, among others, John M. Crawford, Jr., Robert H. Ellsworth, Marie-Hélène and Guy Weill, and the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang family, as well as continued Museum acquisitions supported by Douglas Dillon and the Dillon Fund, have more than doubled the size and scope of the Museum's holdings in the field and have made possible a lively exhibition program.

Through the generous support of enlightened benefactors such as Mr. Dillon, the Museum's Department of Asian Art, under Wen C. Fong, has become a major center for the display and study of Asian art and culture in this country. It has been a great source of personal pleasure and satisfaction for me, as Director, to support and witness the growth of Asian art at the Metropolitan. With the help of the Dillon Fund, the Museum now takes pride in publishing this impressive volume of scholarship, which will no doubt, in the years to come, contribute significantly to the study and appreciation of Chinese art and culture.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Preface

It was C. Douglas Dillon who first encouraged me to write a book that would make Chinese painting and calligraphy understandable to many more people than it now reaches, indeed to all those who have any interest in the field. In approaching the reconstruction of art history, I am reminded of Professor Frederick W. Mote's observation that "Chinese civilization did not lodge its history in buildings. . . . [The] real past . . . is a past of the mind; its imperishable elements are moments of human experience. The only truly enduring embodiments of the eternal human moments are the literary ones."[1] I should like now to add to the literary masterpieces cited by Professor Mote Chinese paintings as equally unforgettable moments of Chinese history. Through the tumultuous past century, too much of China's finest history has been forgotten. Learning to read Chinese paintings as moments that illuminated the artists' lives and the world in which they lived has, for me, proved to be as endlessly pleasurable as it has been enlightening.

The present volume, a study of early Chinese painting and calligraphy based on the holdings of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is not intended as a definitive history. Rather, it is designed to be an alternative history, focusing on individual works as artifacts through which their historical and social context may be reconstructed. I should like to begin with some prefatory remarks that may help to define the parameters of my work.

Because the attribution of a Chinese painting cannot be accepted uncritically when historical or archaeological documentation is lacking, style becomes the only available evidence to establish date and origin. Structural analysis, the analysis of the way forms are organized and perceived on a picture plane, enables us to understand how pictorial conventions were refined and altered over the centuries, either to form an ever closer approximation of received reality or to express meaning through exaggeration and distortion. As Chinese artists over the centuries came to master representational skills and moved toward the conquest of the illusion of depth and natural movement in space, structural changes in the conventions of

representation also progressed through clearly defined stages. After depth illusion was fully mastered in Chinese landscape painting in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the painter turned back to the picture surface for structure and organization. In postulating the existence of period characteristics marked by certain structural principles, however, we are not saying that there was a unilinear development in Chinese painting. Indeed, the Chinese pictorial tradition from its earliest beginnings was diverse in its regional variety and individual expression. By considering the historical and social context of a painting, we learn about the complexity of our subject and add nuance to our understanding of period style.

Another basis of my approach to Chinese art history is the importance of the art of calligraphy to the Chinese pictorial tradition. The calligraphic aesthetic was significant to the development of scholar-official art in that it was traditionally understood as a form of self-expression, and in Chinese painting theory, representation was linked through calligraphic brushwork to the artist's physical presence. The assertion that the function of Chinese painting is self-expression may appear to contradict current Western views that focus on the social dimensions of artistic creation. But in fact this is not so. In scholar-official art, the artist projected a life and expression that transcended realistic representation. By exploring the life of the artist and the implications of his life within the context of his environment and historical moment, we discover that calligraphic painting as an expression of the individual was very much a product of time, place, and social situation.

This would suggest that the history of scholar-official art is in fact a history of the artists who created it. Since the late Northern Sung period, in the late eleventh century, Chinese artists worked in accordance with two Neo-Confucian approaches to creativity: the orthodox didactic view, which stated that "art must serve or convey the Tao, the Great Way [*wen-i tsai-tao*]," and the approach of the individualist, which maintained that "art is a means of achieving the power of the Tao [*wen-i kuan-tao*]," and the cultivation of the individual moral self. In either case, the scholar-official artist was called upon to uphold the lofty objective of becoming the very embodiment of Confucian moral value and the conscience of the civilized world. Such high-minded ambition has been a staple of the Chinese scholar's life for more than a thousand years. Significantly, Chinese scholar-artists, who regarded both art and politics as a reflection of the cosmic order, periodically wrought successful reforms and renewals in art at precisely those moments when attempts at political reform had failed. In art as in politics, however, the Chinese scholar was pedagogic and orthodox in his intent though conceptual and intuitive in his approach.

In bringing the present work to completion, I would like to give thanks to my family, mentors, friends, and students who nurtured and inspired me. To the love of my late parents, I owe a great debt. Their gifts to me included the engagement of a renowned traditional scholar-artist, my late master, Li Chien (Cho-jan chü-shih), as a private tutor. Master Li opened to me the world of calligraphy, painting, and the Chinese classics. I am equally indebted to my many Western scholar-teachers and mentors at Princeton, who, in the 1950s, having instructed me and given me a new set of intellectual tools, supported me by expanding Princeton's curriculum to accommodate my special interests. High on this list are the late Professors George Rowley and A. M. Friend, Professor Kurt Weitzmann, and the late Professors Erwin Panofsky and Rensselaer W. Lee.

Since the early 1970s, I have enjoyed the unique privilege of combining teaching and museum work at Princeton University and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. My work since that time reflects the benefit and support I have received from both these institutions. This book, for example, could not have been written without, on the one hand, the stimulation of the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, and, on the other, the inspiration provided by generations of graduate students who participated in my seminars at Princeton. I have tried to mention, whenever possible, specific contributions by individual students, in the notes following each chapter.

At Princeton, my debts to my friends and colleagues, past and present, are too great to enumerate. But I wish to give special thanks to Professor Frederick W. Mote, who, following the progress of my manuscript, made insightful comments that helped to reshape several chapters of the book. To Fritz and Hsiao-lan Mote, my wife, Connie, and I owe a debt of lifelong friendship and nurturing that can only be acknowledged with humble gratitude. I wish to thank also several other colleagues and friends for reading parts of the manuscript and making valuable suggestions: Professors Robert Bagley, Thomas Kaufmann, and John Pinto of Princeton's Department of Art and Archaeology, read early versions of the Introduction and made useful comments on my discussion of art-historical methodology; Professor James T. C. Liu, of Princeton's Department of East Asian Studies, read the chapters on the arts of the Sung dynasty and made suggestions on several fine points of Sung history; and Professor Maggie Bickford, of Brown University, Providence, made thoughtful suggestions on Chapter 5. In addition, Professor James F. Cahill, of the University of California, Berkeley, Professor Jerome Silbergeld, of the University of Washington, Seattle, and Professor Roderick Whitfield, of London University, read the manuscript in its entirety and gave discerning and helpful suggestions; I am most grateful to them.

In New York City, I owe the success of my long-term consultancy at the Metropolitan Museum to many friends and associates, in particular, two very special individuals: Philippe de Montebello, Director, whose dedication to quality and high standards and brilliant administration have not only made the Metropolitan the envy of the art museums in this country but also brought on a new age of intellectual excitement in the Metropolitan's own history; and C. Douglas Dillon, whose generosity in supporting the Museum is matched only by his diligence and keen intelligence in guiding its activities. Because of Mr. Dillon's interest, the Metropolitan Museum now possesses one of the foremost collections of ancient Chinese painting and calligraphy outside China.

In 1983, Connie and I and our son Laurence accompanied Douglas and Suzzie Dillon, Douglas's daughter Phyllis Collins, and Phyllis's son Douglas Collins on a trip to mainland China. Everywhere we went, Mr. Dillon's natural affinity with the finer Chinese sensibilities made us enormously popular with our Chinese hosts. At the same time, the trip confirmed Mr. Dillon's belief that he could contribute to the world's understanding of Chinese culture by redoubling his efforts to build the collection of Chinese art at the Metropolitan.

Having expressed his interest in supporting this publication, Mr. Dillon followed its progress by reading every word of the manuscript, making copious notes and suggestions for improvement, and, on occasion, giving just the right boost to the morale of the working team. Mr. Dillon's repeated injunction for clarity of thought and presentation could not, however, have been easily satisfied by my efforts alone, without the rigorous but sensitive editing of Emily Walter. I wish to take this opportunity to pay a heartfelt tribute to Ms. Walter, who, representing the best of her profession, took a strong interest in the subject, entered into a dialogue with the author, and with simplicity and grace helped to cut through complex and recondite thoughts and language barriers to bring a difficult subject into common perspective. I am grateful to John O'Neill, Editor in Chief and General Manager of Publications, for assigning Ms. Walter to be my editor and for managing this complex and difficult project, and to Barbara Burn, Executive Editor, for skillfully coordinating various aspects of the publishing process.

Thanks to the generous support of the Dillon Fund, the production of this book enjoyed the best efforts of a team of dedicated professionals: Malcolm Varon produced flawless transparencies for the colorplates; the master printer Jean Genoud made several trips to New York to ensure that his color separations faithfully reproduced the original works of art; Bruce Campbell created the book's elegant design, which effectively weds the

illustrations to the text; Gwen Roginsky and Susan Chun oversaw every aspect of its production and printing. The notes and bibliography were meticulously organized and edited by Jean Wagner; and Robert Palmer created the book's most useful index. Further thanks go to Joseph Chang, now of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, who, while a graduate fellow at the Metropolitan in 1986–1987, compiled research and photographic files for the selection of the Metropolitan's paintings included in the book; I am most appreciative of his good work.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to my colleague and friend at the Metropolitan, Associate Curator Maxwell K. Hearn, whose selfless devotion to his work is surpassed only by his love for Chinese painting. Dr. Hearn supervised and coordinated the multifarious tasks of securing the illustrations, overseeing the design, directing the color photography, planning the maps, compiling the bibliography and checking the glossary-index, as well as making numerous suggestions for improving the contents of my text. But for his untiring effort to challenge everyone, most especially myself, to do his best, the book would have appeared with less thoughtfulness and balance than it now achieves.

Wen C. Fong
Blue Mountain Lake, New York
August 1991

1. Frederick W. Mote, "A Millenium of Chinese Urban History: Form, Time, and Space Concepts in Soochow," in Robert A. Kapp, ed., *Rice University Studies: Four Views of China* 59, no. 4 (Fall 1973), p. 51.

Chronology

Hsia Dynasty (*unconfirmed*)	21st–16th century B.C.
Shang Dynasty	16th century–ca. 1045 B.C.
Chou Dynasty	ca. 1045–256 B.C.
Spring and Autumn period	722–481 B.C.
Warring States period	480–221 B.C.
Ch'in Dynasty	221–206 B.C.
Han Dynasty	206 B.C.–A.D. 220
Three Kingdoms	220–65
Western Tsin Dynasty	265–317
Southern Dynasties	317–589
Eastern Tsin	317–420
Liu Sung	420–79
Southern Ch'i	479–502
Liang	502–57
Ch'en	557–89
Northern Dynasties	386–581
Northern Wei	386–534
Eastern Wei	534–50
Western Wei	535–56
Northern Ch'i	550–77
Northern Chou	557–81
Sui Dynasty	581–618
T'ang Dynasty	618–906
Liao Dynasty	907–1125
Five Dynasties	907–60
Later Liang	907–23
Later T'ang	923–36
Later Chin	936–46
Later Han	946–50
Later Chou	950–60
Sung Dynasty	960–1279
Northern Sung	960–1127
Southern Sung	1127–1279
Chin Dynasty	1115–1234
Yüan Dynasty	1260–1368
Ming Dynasty	1368–1644
Ch'ing Dynasty	1644–1911

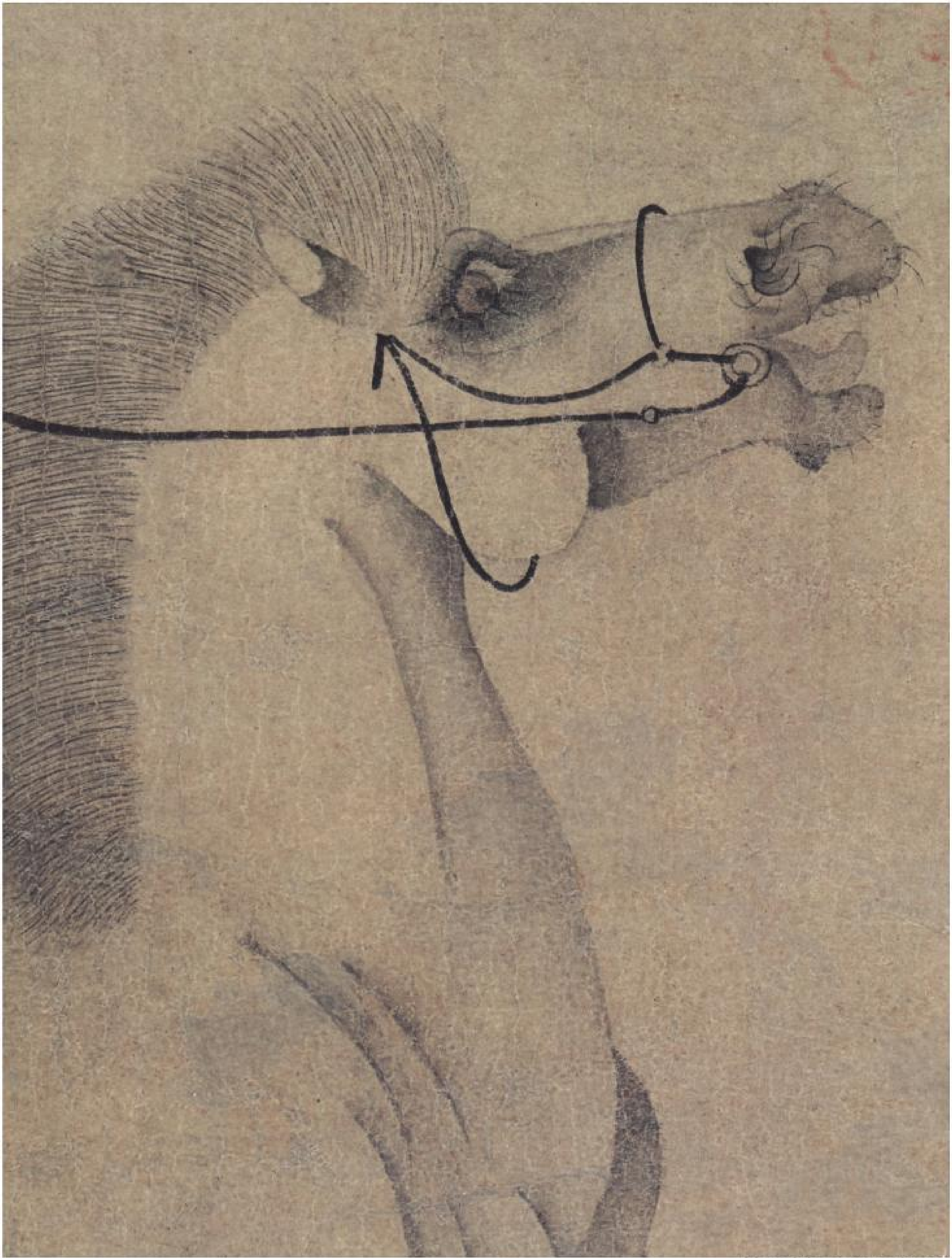
Emperors of the Sung and Yüan Dynasties

Emperor's Posthumous Temple Title	*Reign Dates*
Sung Dynasty	
Northern Sung	
T'ai-tsu	960–76
T'ai-tsung	976–97
Chen-tsung	997–1022
Jen-tsung	1022–63
Ying-tsung	1063–67
Shen-tsung	1067–85
Che-tsung	1085–1100
Hui-tsung	1100–25
Ch'in-tsung	1125–27
Southern Sung	
Kao-tsung	1127–62
Hsiao-tsung	1162–89
Kuang-tsung	1189–94
Ning-tsung	1194–1224
Li-tsung	1224–64
Tu-tsung	1264–74
Kung-tsung	1274–76
Tuan-tsung	1276–78
Wei Wang	1278–79

Emperor's Posthumous Temple Title	*Reign Dates*
Yüan Dynasty	
Shih-tsu	1260–94
Ch'eng-tsung	1294–1307
Wu-tsung	1307–11
Jen-tsung	1311–20
Ying-tsung	1320–23
Chin-tsung	1323–28
Wen-tsung	1328–29
Ming-tsung	1329
Wen-tsung*	1329–32
Ning-tsung	1332–33
Shun Ti	1333–67

*Restored to throne.

Beyond
Representation



Introduction

Anyone who looks at a fourteenth-century Yüan dynasty (1279–1368) literati (*wen-jen*) landscape painting knows that what he is seeing is a totally changed world from that portrayed in the monumental landscape images of the early Sung dynasty (960–1279). The later Chinese painting shows the artist as an individual speaking with word and image of extraordinary passion and commitment, in a voice that seems to us today cogent, sympathetic, even modern. That such individual expressions in painting appeared as early as the fourteenth century comes as a surprise. To chronicle and somehow explain this phenomenon is the purpose of this book.

Perhaps in no other civilization has art so intentionally been accorded as vital and central a role in culture and society as in China. The emperors were not only actively involved in the patronage and cultivation of the arts but were often themselves accomplished artists. The art of the imperial Academy was not only an art of poetry and beauty but of moral and political ideals as well, supported by the Neo-Confucian dictate that art must serve the Tao, or Great Way, but with the added injunction that the Tao was ineluctably represented by the state.

Another basic tenet of Chinese culture held that the pursuit of art was a valid way of cultivating one's moral self. Indeed, the conception of the individualistic artist as a culture hero follows an ancient model, that of the recluse as the embodiment of the Confucian moral conscience of the state, who, in times of political turmoil, came to be viewed as a symbol of resistance to tyranny. The thirteenth-century loyalist scholar-artist Cheng Ssu-hsiao wrote of such men:

> We revere [ancient recluses such as] Hsü Yu, Po-i, and Shu-ch'i [who resisted power and tyranny]. . . . If such men had not existed, all later generations would have had to walk in the shadows of tyrants, who by killing men's spirits, would have made them all slaves.[1]

It was Confucius (551–479 B.C.) who first defined literary, or artistic, expression for the Chinese world: "When there is intent [*chih*, "wish" or "purpose"], it is speech [*yen*] that fulfills that intent, and literature [*wen*] that carries out speech."[2] Similarly, the fifth-century critic Liu Hsieh wrote of the expression of emotional response in poetry:

> The Great Shun said, "Poetry expresses the heart's intent in words; songs set words to music." This exposition by the sage has clearly shown the nature of poetry. Therefore, "what lies in the heart is intent; when expressed in words, it is poetry."[3]

Attributed to Han Kan (active ca. 742–56). Detail from *Night-Shining White* (pl. 1)

After the Mongol conquest of 1279, self-expression, or "speaking one's intent" (*yen-chih*), became the primary impulse in painting.[4] Indeed, post-conquest painting changed so radically that it could well be considered a new and different kind of pictorial art. While Sung painting took the representation of the objective world as its subject, Yüan painting marked the end of objective representation; the real subject of Yüan painting is the artist's inner response to his world. Because it was believed that the meaning of a painted subject, made complex by personal and symbolic associations, could no longer be expressed without language, the painter began to inscribe poems on his works. In a Yüan painting that is inscribed with poetry, the meaning of the word and the image was further extended by calligraphic brushwork. The multiple relationships between word, image, and calligraphy thus formed the basis of a new art, one in which there was a fusion of picture and thought, the concrete and the abstract.

Painting, for the Chinese, is a graphic sign or diagram (*t'u-tsai*) that conveys meaning. According to the fifth-century scholar Yen Yen-chih, there are three kinds of diagrammatic signs: first, the magical hexagrams in the *Book of Changes*, which represent "nature's principles" (*t'u-li*); second, the ideograph, or written word, which represents "concepts" (*t'u-shih*); and finally, painting, which represents "nature's forms" (*t'u-hsing*).[5] Because the signifying power of a magical symbol, calligraphy or painting, derives from the sign maker, a work of art is perceived as a physical mark of the artist, as well as a diagram, or metaphor, of the dynamic but harmonious balance of the universe. Chinese art theory, therefore, links the signifying practice to the artist's physical performance. More than writing, which has both a literal and literary content, calligraphy is gestural and improvisational, a means of communicating both the energy of nature and personal meaning. And painting, too, is functional and "real," imbued with both magical powers and personal expression.[6]

Thus, there is a critical difference between the Chinese approach to painting and the Western approach to painting. Beginning with the Greeks, who saw art as *mimesis*, or the "imitation of nature," Western pictorial representation was directed at once toward the conquest of realistic appearance and the fulfillment of an idealistic classical norm of beauty. Pictorial representation for the Chinese, on the other hand, attempts to create neither realism nor ideal form alone. The Western painter has always attempted to achieve illusion by concealing the pictorial medium,[7] while the Chinese painter has sought to capture, through calligraphic brushwork, the spirit beyond physical likeness (*i-hsing hsieh-shen*).[8] In describing a Chinese painting, it is necessary to refer both to the work and to the physical and spiritual condition of the painter. When the fifth-century Hsieh Ho first coined the term *ch'i-yün-sheng-tung*, "breath-resonance-life-motion," as his first principle of painting, he used a number of "breath" compounds to describe both the painter and the painting: "breath energy," "robust breath," "spirited breath," "breath of life," and "cultivated breath."[9] And the ninth-century art historian Chang Yen-yüan wrote, "If a painter seeks breath-resonance [vital force] in painting, physical likeness will

naturally be present in his work."[10] When the "breath" of a painter, and thus of his work, stimulates a viewer's response, his painting projects a life and energy beyond physical representation.

The key to Chinese painting is its calligraphic brushwork. Known as the "trace" of the brush and ink, the subject of a calligraphic work is the brush as an extension of the calligrapher's own body. Similarly, a Chinese painting projects a painter's physical movements.[11] Because of the importance of the artist's personal "trace," or imprint, in his work, achieving illusion by concealing or erasing the medium would have been counterproductive. By never aspiring to realism alone, the Chinese artist was free to use the signs of both writing and painting to produce a poem-painting, a work that is read and recited as well as viewed. In the fourteenth century, poetry, calligraphy, and painting had reached a new stage in their relation to one another, one in which they were not only mutually reinforcing but came to be interwoven as a form of creative expression, their verbal and graphic elements bringing mutual extension and fulfillment.

Despite their critical reservation against realism, Chinese painters did master illusion in painting. After the realistic representation of nature reached its height by the late Sung, Ni Tsan, in the fourteenth century, would ask, "Why should I worry whether my bamboo shows likeness or not? . . . Others may call it hemp or reed."[12] For Ni Tsan, painted bamboo, though it may have looked like hemp or reed, represented bamboo when it felt "true," when it had achieved *pu-ssu* (literally, "not resembling" or "unlikeness") and was beyond representation. The Chinese painter, because he never developed a scientific approach to anatomy or used chiaroscuro or perspective, had no reason to rebel against representation.[13] Consequently, he had no need to create a nonobjective art.

Early Chinese pictorial representation was at first concerned with *hsing-ssu*, or "form likeness," that is, formal resemblance of the image to what the eye sees in reality. In a third-century B.C. representation of a prancing horse (fig. 1), a rubbing from a Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) stamped tomb tile from Lo-yang, the form likeness of the horse suggests that the drawing was based on observation from nature. But the way the ancient Chinese wrote about horses suggests that the image is in fact more than merely a visual account of what the artist saw.

During the Han period, fabulous horses from Ferghana (modern Tadzhikistan), known as "heavenly" or "dragon" horses, were sometimes brought to the emperor as gifts by visiting foreign dignitaries.[14] Larger and more powerful than the Mongolian ponies native to north China, these highly prized war steeds, with long, narrow heads, large eyes and nostrils, and imperiously arched necks, were described as having supernatural attributes, such as sweating blood and running a thousand *li* (over three hundred miles) a day. A Chinese painting of a superior horse is, therefore, understood as a supernatural "dragon" horse.

The *Striding Dragon* (fig. 2) of the Six Dynasties period (220–589), a chimerical beast with a gaping mouth, reptilian body, high-strutting gait, and

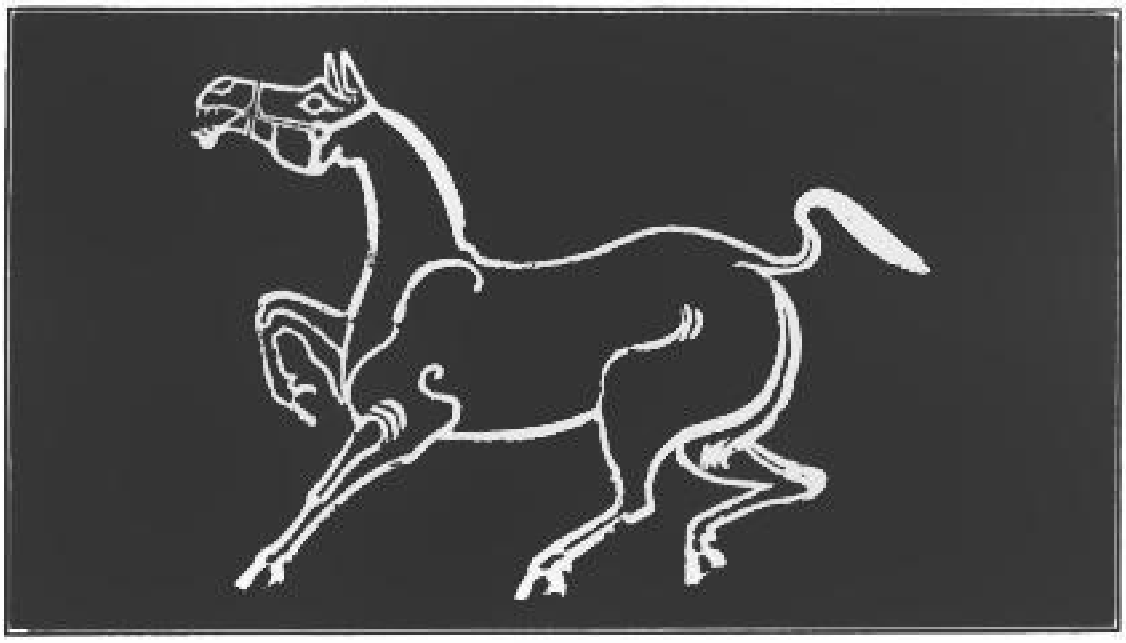


Fig. 1. *Prancing Horse*, Western Han dynasty, 3rd–1st century B.C. Rubbing of a stamped tomb tile from Lo-yang, Honan Province

poised tail, echoes the model of the Han horse. Both the horse and the dragon are formed of rounded shapes and swerving curves twisting and turning in space. The tautly energetic thickening-and-thinning lines of the Han engraving describe the fluid but compact form of the animal, expressing its speed and movement. In order to represent a horse that is a heavenly dragon horse, the artist conceives of a dragonlike form—which is, in effect, a supernatural equine beast.

The close resemblance between the image of the horse and the image of the dragon suggests a larger truth about artistic representation: the artist works neither from life nor from the imagination alone. Rather, he follows, on the one hand, graphic conventions, or schemas, for his transcription of visual form onto the painted or sculpted surface and, on the other, culturally embedded meanings associated with the image. E. H. Gombrich, in his book *Art and Illusion*, characterizes the work of an artist as "making before matching [reality]" through a process of "schema and correction." Paraphrasing Emanuel Loewy, a student of ancient Greek art, Gombrich summarizes the rendering of nature in art as follows: "Archaic art starts from the schema, the symmetrical frontal figure conceived for one aspect only, and the conquest of naturalism may be described as the gradual accumulation of corrections due to the observation of reality."[13] Once established, the archaic Han image of the prancing horse became the basic schema, which was followed, with only gradational modifications, by all later Chinese artists: the gradual perfecting of realistic representation, which reached its high point during the Sung dynasty, was followed in the Yüan and thereafter by a return to symbolic representation, with an emphasis on calligraphic and surface abstraction.

Early Chinese figural representation, from the Han dynasty in the third century B.C. through the T'ang in the eighth century A.D., witnessed a development which parallels that of the so-called Greek miracle, or revolution, of the awakening of the figure from its representation in a rigidly archaic frontality

Fig. 2. *Striding Dragon*, Six Dynasties period, 220–589. Gilt bronze, 4⅜ x 6⅞ in. (11 x 17 cm). Gift of Mrs. Albert E. McVitty, The Art Museum, Princeton University (1949-26)



to its representation as an organically articulated form moving freely in space.[16] Landscape painting, which developed from the Han dynasty through the end of the Sung, in the late thirteenth century, progressed from the representation of schematic mountain and tree motifs to the creation of illusionistic space, with foreshortening and an integrated ground plane in spatial recession.[17]

The shift in Chinese painting from realistic representation to symbolic self-expression, which occurred in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, was both a product and an instrument of change in Chinese social and cultural history.[18] During the T'ang dynasty, the aristocratic ruling class was cosmopolitan in outlook, and T'ang narrative art, in serving the ritual and didactic needs of the state, represented the splendorous world of emperors and warriors. With the ascendancy of the scholar-official class and the powerful Neo-Confucian movement during the early Northern Sung (960–1127), painters turned from the narrative of human history to the infinitely expanding world of nature. The macrocosmic view of nature of the Northern Sung was replaced during the Southern Sung (1127–1279) by a period of introspective contemplation in painting, when painters, turning inward, used flowers and trees as symbols to suggest mental images. This tendency toward symbolic self-expression became even more prevalent during the Yüan dynasty, following the Mongol conquest. As realistic representation of nature gave way to symbolic images of single trees, bamboo, and flowers, painting became equated with calligraphy. When the image became overladen with symbolic meaning, however, it could no longer be understood without the help of language. By brushing a poem onto his painting, the Yüan literatus (*wen-jen*) artist created a discourse, a verbal context, using both word and image.[19]

Although the calligraphic style came into being after the Mongol conquest, it had its roots in the art of the eleventh-century scholar-officials of the late Northern Sung. During this time, a period of political and moral crisis, calligraphy and painting came increasingly under the domination of the

imperial court. The scholar-officials, Sung China's meritocratic intellectual elite, turned away from official orthodoxy, producing a new kind of art known as scholar-official painting (*shih-ta-fu hua*), which prefigured Yüan literati painting (*wen-jen hua*). Brilliant and uncompromising, late Northern Sung scholar-official artists such as Su Shih, Li Kung-lin, and Mi Fu had the courage to retreat from politics and to lead a reclusive, Thoreau-like existence.[20] Retiring from worldly affairs, the scholar-artist would often embrace Taoism, the ancient mystical philosophy, and Buddhism, the imported Indian religion. The Tao, which for Confucius was moral conduct, was for the Taoist and the Buddhist the way of nature—effortless, free, and "of itself so" (*tzu-jan*). Rebelling against the decorative public style practiced by the professional artisan painters, scholar-amateurs sought a private transcendence through the creation of individual style. Drawing on archaic sources, simplifying and purging their work of artifice—colorful decorativeness and imitative realism—they reintegrated themselves as poets, calligraphers, and painters with the Tao of the universe. In extolling archaic simplicity as a means of renewal, they found themselves failing in politics but succeeding magnificently in artistic endeavor.

Beginning in the late Northern Sung, Chinese scholar-officials and artists saw the meditation on past history and the integration of its lessons as a successful strategy for bringing about radical reform and stylistic innovation. The return to the past meant not the imitation of the past but, ironically, its opposite. For only by the intensive study of the past and a stripping away to its essential truths could the artist be reunited both with nature and with the past. It was by this path that he hoped to re-create himself.

Perhaps the key difference between Chinese and Western painting lies not in the difference between the artists' perceived notions about the past, but in their different historical uses of it. In Western art history, with its roots in idealist speculation, the term *classicism* describes Greco-Roman antiquity and those periods of artistic revival inspired by the Greco-Roman ideal, especially the Italian Renaissance and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. In the history of Western art, classicism is followed by periods of anticlassicism (for example, the Gothic, the Baroque, and the Romantic eras), which were perceived as periods of decline. But in the history of Chinese art, no single period of antiquity represents a prescriptive classical norm.[21] Despite the ubiquitous references to antiquity through the centuries, no one period in particular can be said to be more classical than another.

In Western art history, insofar as classicism is guided by values based on order and structure, there is an assumed ideological link with legitimacy and power.[22] In contrast, the basis of a Chinese artist's "archaic idea" (*ku-i*), as opposed to official revivalism, has been preeminently personal and psychological. In meditating and commenting on a quoted text or an early landscape tradition or mode, the artist freely adapts and alters it to convey his new meanings. Viewed in the context of contrasting an unsatisfactory present (*chin*) with the idealized memory of the past (*ku*), archaism represents less a standard than a longing and justification for change. In calligraphy and painting, we see cor-

relations between archaic styles and individual psychological responses and social behavior. According to his own temperament, an artist would choose an archaic mode and invent his own expressive style. Thus Chinese archaism, as opposed to Western classicism, simultaneously satisfies two seemingly contradictory impulses: the reconstruction of past styles as an individual, personal expression. It serves, paradoxically, both orthodoxy and dissent, tradition and innovation.[23]

After the establishment of the Yüan dynasty, the scholar-artists turned inward in their attempt to escape from political and social upheaval. Literati painting was not so much an expression of its time as an individual response to and defense against life's vicissitudes. In the Yüan artistic revival, we see the artist's struggle for reorientation and the rediscovery of individual identity. As opposed to the Western vision of history as progressive development, the Chinese view of history as cyclical provided the Yüan literati painter with the possibility of restoring the harmonious unity of the past and of forging continuity beyond change.[24]

1. See *Cheng So-nan hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Collected Prose Writings of Cheng Ssu-hsiao), in *Chih-pu-tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* (Collectanea of the Studio of Never Learning Enough; preface dated 1776) (reprint, Taipei: Hsing-chung Shu-chü, 1964), vol. 202, p. 2.
2. See James Legge, trans., "Duke Seang, Twenty-fifth Year," in *Spring and Autumn Annals with Tso-chuan Commentary (Ch'un-ch'iu yü tso-chuan)*, vol. 5 of *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Lane, Crawford and Co.; London: Trübner, 1872), part 2, p. 517.
3. See James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 71. I have followed Professor Liu's translation with only one change: the word *chih* is rendered here as "intent" rather than "wishes."
4. In a historical account of the style or circumstances of a work of art or poetry, a description of the artist's state of mind, or his own stated intention, is not always useful. In *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 42, Michael Baxandall prefers to speak of "intention" in relation to pictures rather than to painters, treating it as "a construct descriptive of a relationship between a picture and its circumstances."
5. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties; completed 847), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 1; see also William R. B. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* [vol. 1] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), pp. 65–66.
6. Early Chinese pictorial representation attempted "to stimulate and to respond in kind to" (*kan-lei*) the living world in a way related to the ancient magical practices suggested in the *Book of Changes* (*I-ching*). See Kiyohiko Munakata, "Concepts of *Lei* and *Kan-lei* in Early Chinese Art Theory," in Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 106ff.

   The great fourth-century figure painter Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406) is said to have affected a woman he admired by painting her portrait and pricking the heart with a needle. See Ku's biography in Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 5, pp. 67–72. Tsung Ping (375–443), the fourth-century Buddhist (and Taoist) landscape painter, perceived landscape painting as an iconic image, a repository of the spiritual power (*shen*) of nature. When he was old and infirm, he used landscape painting to communicate with the spirit: "As I am afraid of limping about the Stone Gate, I paint images and spread colors. . . . I unroll paintings and face them in solitude, and while seated I plumb the ends of the earth." See Susan Bush, "Tsung Ping's Essay on Painting Landscapes and the 'Landscape Buddhism' of Mount Lu," in Bush and Murck, *Theories of Arts in China*, pp. 132–64.
7. For a discussion of the Western "bias towards a realism that tries to achieve illusion by overpowering the medium," see Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7, no. 4 (July–August 1940), pp. 296–310; reprinted in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*

(New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 35–46.

8. See Ku K'ai-chih's biography in Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 5, p. 71.
9. See Wen C. Fong, "Ch'i-yün-sheng-tung: 'Vitality, Harmonious Manner and Aliveness,'" *Oriental Art*, n.s. 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1966), pp. 159–64.
10. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 15; and see Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, p. 149.
11. In *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 89–92, Norman Bryson writes: "Western painting is predicated on the disavowal of deictic reference [the locus of utterance], on the disappearance of the body as site of the image; and this twice over: for the painter, and for the viewing subject. . . . If China and Europe possess the two most ancient traditions of representational painting, the traditions nevertheless bifurcate, from the beginning, at the point of deixis. Painting in China is predicated on the acknowledgement and indeed the cultivation of deictic markers . . . [while] through much of the Western tradition oil paint is treated primarily as an *erasive* medium."
12. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi* (Collected Works of the Pure and Secluded Pavilion [of Ni Tsan]; 1713), in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an* (Collection of Rare Books from the Yüan Dynasty) (reprint, Taipei: Kuo-li Chung-yang T'u-shu-kuan, 1970), vol. 10, *chüan* 9, p. 428.
13. For the European predicament, see E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Washington, D.C., and New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 281.
14. See W. Perceval Yetts, "The Horse: A Factor in Early Chinese History," *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua* 9 (1934), pp. 231–55.
15. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 118. See also Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, translated by John Fothergill (London: Duckworth, 1907), pp. 22–27.
16. See Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, pp. 116ff.
17. See Wen C. Fong, "Toward a Structural Analysis of Chinese Landscape Painting," *Art Journal* 28, no. 4 (Summer 1969), pp. 388–97; and Wen C. Fong, "Pictorial Representation in Chinese Landscape Painting," in Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984), pp. 20–73.
18. Recent scholarship increasingly regards the Sung dynasty as a turning point in Chinese history. Mark Elvin, in arguing how economic as well as scientific and technological progress in China reached its climax between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, has noted a parallel between what he calls "a high-level equilibrium trap" in the Chinese economy with the "profound change around 1300" in Chinese painting. See Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), especially p. 225. James T. C. Liu, in *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), sees a basic shift toward "turning inward" in China's long history during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. And Ray Huang, in *China: A Macro History*, rev. ed. (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), pp. 149ff., describing the Ming "retreat" after the failed Sung experiment in fiscal expansion, characterizes the Ming as "an introverted noncompetitive state."
19. See Yu-kung Kao, "Chinese Lyric Aesthetics," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 47–90.
20. It is interesting to compare the late Northern Sung scholar-official artist to the late nineteenth-century European avant-garde artist, as characterized by Clement Greenberg: "In seeking to go beyond Alexandrianism [Greenberg's term for academicism], a part of Western bourgeois society has produced something unheard of heretofore: avant-garde culture. . . . Retiring from public altogether, the avant-garde poet or artist sought to maintain the high level of his art by both narrowing and raising it to the expression of an absolute in which all relativities and contradictions would be either resolved or beside the point." See Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (Fall 1939), pp. 34–49; reprinted in Frascina, *Pollock and After*, pp. 22–23.
21. See John Hay, "Some Questions Concerning Classicism in Relation to Chinese Art," in David Freedberg, ed., "The Problem of Classicism: Ideology and Power," *Art Journal* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 26–34.
22. See David Freedberg, "Editor's Statement," in Freedberg, "Problem of Classicism," pp. 7–9.
23. See Wen C. Fong, "Archaism as a 'Primitive' Style," in Christian F. Murck, ed., *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 89–109.
24. The epochal shift in Chinese painting from pictorial representation to calligraphic self-expression between the Sung and Yüan periods offers a striking parallel to the displacement of the representative by the expressive in early twentieth-century Western art. See Wen C. Fong, "Modern Art Criticism and Chinese Painting History," in Ching-i Tu, ed., *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East*

Asian Civilization. Proceedings of the Lecture Series on East Asian Civilization (New Brunswick: Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, 1987), pp. 98–108. With the end of Western mimetic representation and the replacement of realism with abstraction, there was a basic change in the twentieth-century Western approach to painting. According to the critic Clement Greenberg:

> Realistic, illusionist art had dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art. Modernism used art to call attention to art. The limitations that constitute the medium of painting—the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of pigment—were treated by the Old Masters as negative factors that could be acknowledged only implicitly or indirectly. Modernist painting has come to regard these same limitations as positive factors that are to be acknowledged openly.

See Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature*, no. 4 (Spring 1965), pp. 193–201; reprinted in Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison, eds., *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (London: Harper and Row [1982]), p. 6.

A further correlation between post-Sung literati painting and twentieth-century Western art is the loss of a traditional public function. In both cases, artistic communication became a private experience. A logical consequence of this development was a reevaluation of the history of art. In both later Chinese literati painting and postmodern contemporary art in the West, artists began to quote traditional works of art in order to critique and comment on art history as well as on their own work. See Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?*, translated by Christopher S. Wood (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 46–48.



1 Of the Human World: Narrative Representation

Narrative representation first appeared in Chinese art toward the end of the Bronze Age, during the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.), replacing what had been until then primarily an ornamental tradition. Palaces, temples, and grave furnishings came to be decorated with representations of mythological and historical subjects. According to the ninth-century art historian Chang Yen-yüan, ancient wall paintings and scrolls, as symbols of state, were used by the rulers as instruments of legitimation. The function of official painting was "to perfect the civilizing teachings [of the sages] and to help [illustrate] social relationships."[1]

Ancient texts from about the fourth century B.C. onward spoke of four classes of people in Chinese society: the ruling scholar-official elite, the landowners and farmers, craftsmen and artisans, and merchants and tradesmen.[2] Traditionally, it fell to the craftsmen and artisans, as slaves or servants, to execute paintings of a decorative and didactic nature to serve the ritual and public needs of the state. Beginning in the late Han period (ca. 3rd century A.D.), however, members of the aristocracy and the scholar-official elite who were drawn to the arts also distinguished themselves as "educated," rather than "artisan," calligraphers and painters.

As narrative illustration, early figural representation appears in two distinct formats, the monoscenic and the continuous.[3] A Warring States bronze *hu* (fig. 3) demonstrates the monoscenic mode. The vessel surface is divided into horizontal bands, each consisting of a series of hunting scenes, the same scene repeated four or eight times around the vessel. Each scene shows motifs of hunters with birds and animals; each motif is seen en face and scattered over the field. The representation is more pictographic than pictorial; it is read sequentially, rather than visually comprehended as a whole. The continuous method, on the other hand, shows a strict adherence to a register line. On stamped tomb tiles from Lo-yang dating from the Western Han dynasty (3rd–1st century B.C.; fig. 4), for example, single elements are repeated to form a line of flying geese or a procession of figures or animals; trees are used as scene dividers or space fillers. Single episodes may be linked together, as in a cartoon strip, to form a succession of images that relate a narrative which is continuous in both time and space. A favorite Chinese painting format for showing a continuous narrative is the handscroll, a horizontal piece of silk or paper rolled into a scroll. By manipulating both ends simultaneously, so that one end of

Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). Detail from *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 15, "Remonstration" (pl. 8d)

the scroll is rolled up as the other end is unrolled, the viewer is free to move forward or backward in the composition at will.

From the third century B.C. to the eighth century A.D., Chinese representations of humans and animals underwent a change analogous to the Greek "miracle of awakening," an evolution from archaic rigidity to fully articulated, naturalistic form.[4] The archaic mode, shared by several early cultures—Egypt and Archaic Greece, for example—is frontal and schematic: human and animal forms, nonorganic and two-dimensional, are depicted in fractional, additive parts in frontal or profile views.[5] The archaic mode of representing a horse is seen in both the Han dynasty *Prancing Horse*, discussed earlier (fig. 1), and the fabulous Han bronze *Flying Horse* (fig. 5), which toured the United States in 1974–75:[6] the form of the animal is expressed in a linear schema, its two sides conceived as symmetrical halves, with both legs on each side extended either forward or backward in an unnatural gait.

By the eighth century, however, Chinese artists had mastered realism in figural representation. In the T'ang dynasty (618–906), we see what was already a long-established tradition of scroll painting on silk or paper. Housed in imperial palace libraries, the scrolls were a form of pictorial historiography that showed how rulers employed ritual, symbol, and history to legitimize their rule.



Fig. 3. *Hu* ritual vessel with hunting scenes, Warring States period, 5th–3rd century B.C. Bronze, 13⅞ x 9½ in. (35.3 x 24.2 cm). Bequest of Alfred F. Pillsbury, The Minneapolis Institute of Art (50.46.9)

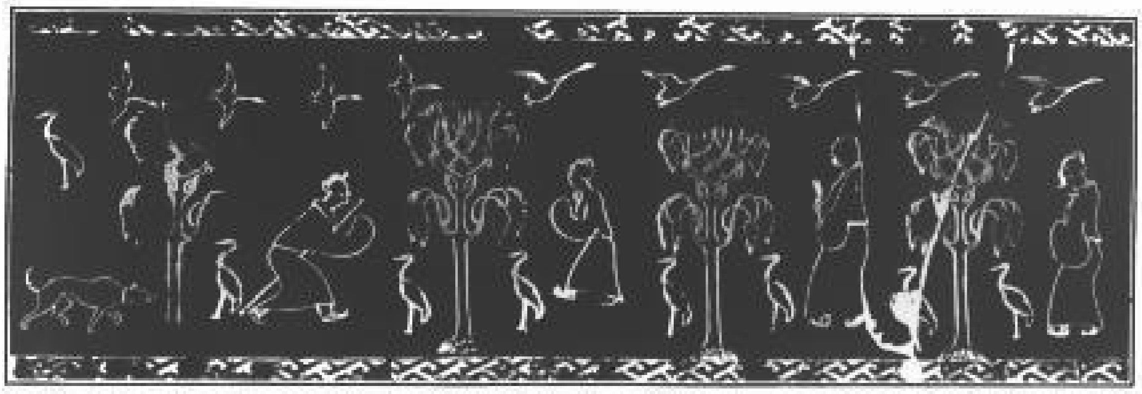


Fig. 4. *Men, Birds, and Trees*, Western Han dynasty, 3rd–1st century B.C. Rubbing of a stamped tomb tile from Loyang, Honan Province, 21 x 63 in. (53.3 x 160 cm)

Under the T'ang, Chinese political and cultural institutions reached their zenith. Successful not only in economic and cultural growth but also on the battlefield, the T'ang dynasty extended over a vast area, east to Korea, south to Vietnam, and westward from southern Siberia across Central Asia. The T'ang capital, Ch'ang-an (modern Sian, Shensi Province), flourished as a great cosmopolitan center of world commerce and culture (Map 1, p. 19). The founder of the T'ang dynasty was the brilliant emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 626–49), who was not only a great military hero but was also highly cultured in the arts. The dynasty was nearly brought to an end by the usurper empress Wu (r. 690–705) before Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–56) restored the dynasty to power.

A War Steed

Few T'ang imperial scroll paintings survive. One of these rare works is a short handscroll on paper attributed to Han Kan (active ca. 742–56) entitled *Night-*

Shining White (pl. 1), a picture of the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung's favorite personal mount.[7] Although the scroll shows only one horse, originally the painting probably included, in a continuous horizontal frieze, a number of famous horses from the emperor's stable. The magnificent war steed is one of the famous breed of so-called heavenly horses from Ferghana. According to the ninth-century historian Chang Yen-yüan, "The imperial stable contained 400,000 [horses], all huge, magnificent animals. . . . The emperor, fond of the arts . . . commanded that Han Kan portray all the fine steeds, such as Jade-Flower Piebald, Night-Shining White, and so forth. . . . Henceforward, Han Kan was the master horse painter of all time."[8]

Han Kan belonged to the generation of mid-T'ang painters who depicted imperial and religious spectacles at the height of T'ang power. A man of humble origins from Ta-liang (modern K'ai-feng, Honan Province),[9] Han Kan worked in a wineshop in the capital, Ch'ang-an, before he was discovered by the scholar-official poet and painter Wang Wei (699?–761?), who sponsored his services as a court painter.[10] In the Imperial Household Department, Han specialized in painting horses.

The impressive array of colophons and seals found on *Night-Shining White* takes the documentary history of the scroll back to the ninth century, when it was possibly in the collection of Chang Yen-yüan. But the form and structure of the painting give visual evidence for placing the work firmly in the eighth century, and the unsurpassed drawing itself suggests that it is from the hand of the master. As a representation of a horse, *Night-Shining White* follows essentially the same linear schema as the Han *Prancing Horse*: profile head with open mouth and arched neck, and smooth, round hindquarters. But



Fig. 5. *Flying Horse*, Eastern Han dynasty, 2nd century A.D. Excavated from a tomb at Lei-t'ai, Wu-wei, Kansu Province. Bronze, 13⅝ x 17¾ in. (34.5 x 45 cm). Kansu Provincial Museum, Lan-chou



Pl. 1. Attributed to Han Kan (active ca. 742–56). *Night-Shining White.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 12⅛ x 13⅜ in. (30.8 x 34 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1977 (1977.78)

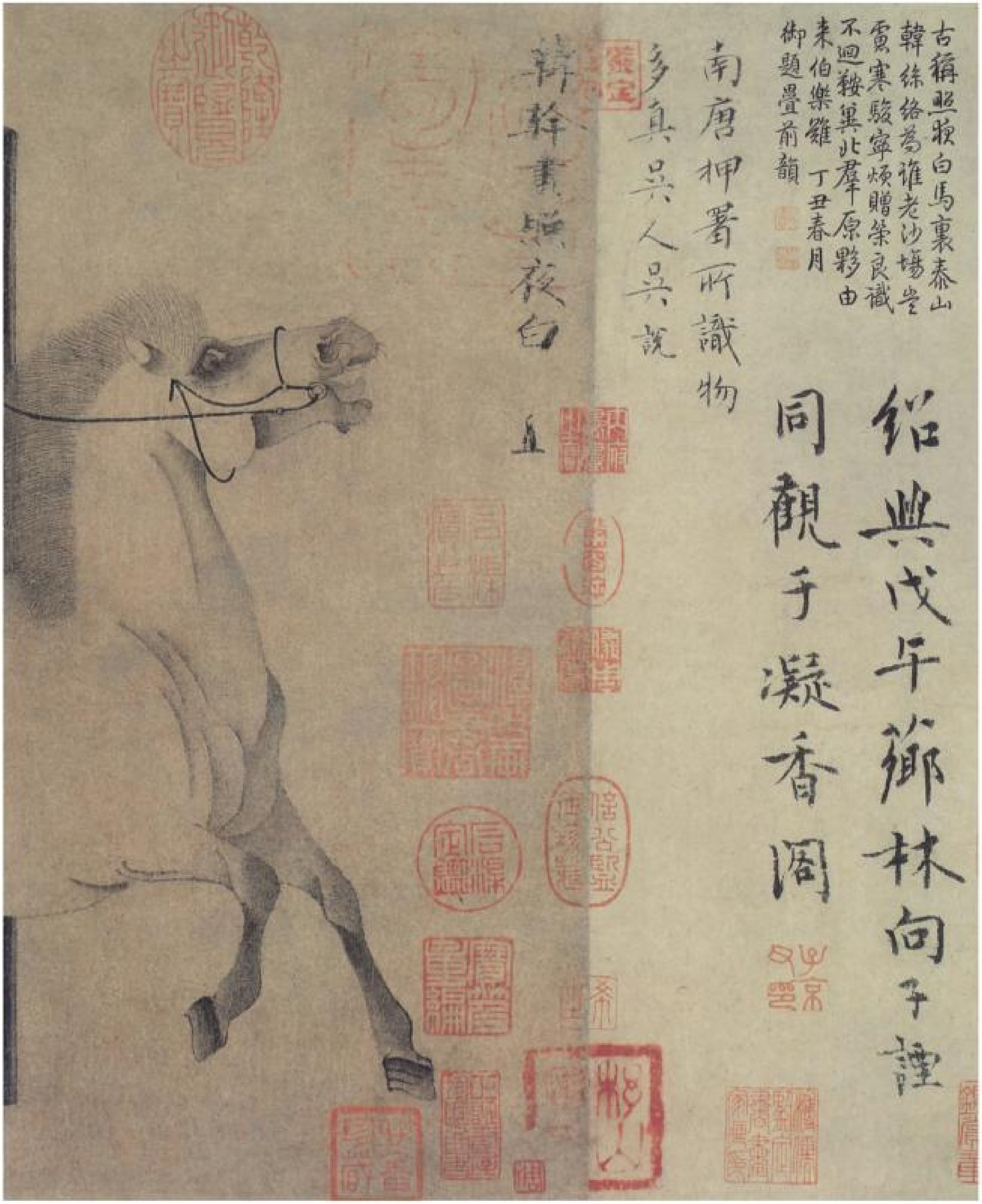

紹興戊午鄧林向子諲
同觀于凝香閣
南唐押署所識物
多真吳人吳說
韓幹畫照夜白



Fig. 6. Buddhist stele, Northern Wei dynasty, dated 525. Detail, "Prancing Horse." The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

by carefully observing nature, and through what Gombrich describes as a process of "making before matching [reality]" with the linear schema,[11] the artist has succeeded in achieving an organically integrated image in the round, with the horse's hooves in proper synchronization, the left-front and right-rear legs touching the ground at the same time.

Between the archaic Han horse and Han Kan's fully developed horse of the eighth century, there was an intermediate, or transitional, stage of development, which is exemplified by a Northern Wei carving dated 525 (fig. 6). Here the strutting animal remains frozen in the archaic mode, though its smoothly bulging silhouette suggests a cylindrical roundness typical of the figure style of the sixth and seventh centuries, seen in Northern Ch'i and Sui cave sculptures of Hsiang-t'ang-shan and Lung-men. This three-stage progression, from the archaic through the transitional to the organic, corresponds to Chang Yen-yüan's division of painting into what he termed, in the ninth century, the three antiquities—high (late Han through early Six Dynasties, 3rd–5th century), middle (Liang through Sui, 6th–7th century), and recent (mid-T'ang, 8th century):

> In paintings of high antiquity, the drawing is simple and the expression plain yet elegant and noble. . . . Paintings of middle antiquity are fine and detailed, exquisitely finished and exceedingly beautiful. . . . Paintings of recent times are brilliantly executed, and they excel in [representational] completeness.[12]

Chang had noted that Han Kan's horses were distinct from earlier images of horses, which were either "goblin-necked and dragon-bodied, and fast like arrows or lightning, but not of the form of real horses," or were depicted as



Map 1. The T'ang Empire in the First Half of the Eighth Century

"flaunting themselves by carrying their heads high, but in want of steady and relaxed postures."[13] Chang's characterization of the middle-antiquity horse perfectly describes the sixth-century carving.

Night-Shining White was probably done as an imperial commission. The great eighth-century poet Tu Fu gives a vivid account of such a painting by Han Kan's teacher General Ts'ao Pa, who painted a Jade Piebald at a command performance:

> The former emperor [Hsüan-tsung] had a Jade Piebald horse;
> Many painters tried but failed to achieve a portrait likeness.
> One day the horse was led to the palace terrace,
> Where it stood, magnificently, raising a strong gust of wind.
> By His Majesty's command, the General opened his silk scroll,
> And with great concentration, slowly he worked.
> Before long a true dragon emerged in the firmament,
> Eradicating all the mortal horses of ten thousand years.
> [The painting] now hangs over the emperor's throne.[14]

The poet here describes the court painter's double challenge of achieving both realism and supernaturalism in his work. When confronted with a magical "dragon" horse, which stood "raising a strong gust of wind," Ts'ao miraculously created a "true dragon" in his pictorial firmament, causing all ordinary horse paintings to pale by comparison.

The Chinese artist valued above all else what the fourth-century painter Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406) called the "transmission of the spirit" (*ch'uan-shen*; detail, pl. 1, p. 2).[15] The first critical theory of painting was formulated

by the fifth-century painter Hsieh Ho (active ca. 479–502). Hsieh based the aesthetic and critical analysis of a painting on what he termed the six principles. The first principle he describes as "breath-resonance-life-motion" (*ch'i-yün-sheng-tung*), the engendering of motion by "breath" and "resonance." This is followed by the second, "bone method in the use of the brush" (*ku-fa yung-pi*), which focuses on the importance of brushwork in creating structure. The third, "responding to things by the representation of form" (*ying-wu-hsiang-hsing*), deals with formal likeness to what the eye sees in nature. And the fourth, "following kind in applying colors" (*sui-lei-fu-ts'ai*), is concerned with color. The fifth principle, called "plotting and planning position and place" (*ching-ying-wei-chih*), is composition. Finally, the sixth, which is of special importance to ancient Chinese painting, is "transmitting and transferring in making copies" (*ch'uan-i-mu-hsieh*), or replication.[16] A painting, Hsieh Ho stated, should be valued not for its technical virtuosity but for its spiritual qualities. In the critical literature of the T'ang dynasty, painters were ranked, in ascending order, from "competent" (*neng*) to "marvelous" (*miao*) to "divine" (*shen*). The "divine" Chinese painter was considered a co-worker of the Creator.

Like Ts'ao Pa, Han Kan as a professional court painter clearly attempted in *Night-Shining White* to excel in visual realism and theatricality. When ordered at the palace to study under another master—possibly Ts'ao—he is supposed to have retorted that His Majesty's steeds were his best teachers.[17] Like most Chinese painters, Han was above all a master of linear definition and movement. In this painting, the drawing approaches such a level of perfection that it needs neither shading nor color to create a sense of completion. With only a minimum of shading, the elegant brushline describes precisely, almost tactually, the bulging contours of the horse's powerful body and quivering muscles. Tethered to a post, the fiery-tempered war steed, with wild eyes, flaring nostrils, flying mane, and rebellious hooves, radiates a supernatural energy, dramatically conveying the restlessly exuberant spirit of the age.

If we recognize a parallel between the development of naturalism in figural representation in Chinese and Greek art, Han Kan's *Night-Shining White* of eighth-century A.D. China may be compared to the sculptures on the frieze of the Parthenon, dating to the fifth century B.C., the height of the Classical period in Greece. Yet it is significant that while the Chinese admired the "completeness" of high T'ang art, they regarded it not as a static condition to be perpetuated but as a state of change and becoming. Thus Chang Yen-yüan wrote in the ninth century:

> When we look at the works of Wu Tao-tzu, we may say that all six principles have been fulfilled and myriad phenomena completely expressed. Some god must be painting through his hand, so profoundly does his work fathom the power of Creation itself.[18]

Yet a state of completeness also implies a consummation. By the late eleventh century, the great scholar-artist Su Shih (1037–1101) would conclude that artistic development had reached its peak in the eighth century:

Overleaf
Pl. 2. After Chou Fang (active ca. 780–ca. 810). *Palace Ladies Bathing Children* (formerly, *Playing with Children*), early 12th century. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 12 x 19 1/8 in. (30.4 x 48.5 cm). Fletcher Fund, 1940 (40.148)

> By the time poetry had produced a Tu Fu, prose writing a Han Yü, calligraphy a Yen Chen-ch'ing, and painting a Wu Tao-tzu, the capacity for art to change had reached its limits.[19]

But when Li Kung-lin, in the eleventh century (figs. 81, 179), or Chao Meng-fu, in the thirteenth (pl. 100), looked back to Han Kan's horse, they sought not to preserve its perfect, and thus complete, form but to use that form as a source of inspiration and renewal through change.

Palace Ladies Bathing Children

There are three different modes of narrative representation in Chinese painting: genre-descriptive, literary, and moral-symbolic.[20] In genre narrative, details from everyday life are observed and described. A literary narrative is a pictorial illustration of a verbal or poetic rendition of an event. A symbolic narrative communicates moral and didactic meanings through the visual image.

A member of the T'ang aristocracy and a leading painter of palace genres, Chou Fang (active ca. 780–ca. 810) is especially admired for his depictions of palace children. *Palace Ladies Bathing Children* (pl. 2), an early twelfth-century copy, preserves a horizontal composition by Chou that was later widely imitated in Southern Sung Academy fan paintings. The composition is also seen in a fan painting formerly attributed to Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75), a tenth-century follower of Chou Fang (fig. 7). *Palace Ladies Bathing Children*



Fig. 7. Unidentified artist (12th–13th century). Formerly attributed to Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75). *Palace Ladies Bathing Children.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 8 15/16 x 9 5/8 in. (22.7 x 24.4 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (35.8)





shows five palace maidservants in a children's nursery attending to the bathing and dressing of six infants. Clockwise from the upper left, two older children, afraid of the water, try to hide themselves in the soft, ample figure of a seated woman. At the center, where bathing in the bronze basin is in progress, a woman expertly restrains a struggling child, her right hand on his head and her left pinching his nostrils to keep out the water, while a second child playfully splashes the one being bathed. At the lower right, a woman plays with two partially dressed infants waiting to be bathed. And at the lower left, two women, one with a child clinging to her back, dress a child who has already been bathed. Strewn on the ground in front of the water basin are a drum and a clapper, the children's toys. At the upper right, a little Pekingese observes the scene dispassionately, no doubt relieved at not having to participate in it.

Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies (fig. 8) is a pre-T'ang or early T'ang tracing copy of a handscroll attributed to the fourth-century painter Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406). Ku K'ai-chih's flat, archaic figures, done in swirling gossamer brushlines, have here taken on a cylindrical roundness typical of the transitional figure style of the sixth and seventh centuries. The composition, however, remains archaic and additive; the family scene, comprising three groups of figures piled up in a pyramid, is set, without receding ground plane, against a blank picture surface. An early eighth-century wall painting, dated 706 (fig. 9), in the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai, in Sian, Shensi Province, shows ladies of the court in a horizontal procession. By now, the figures have a three-dimensional, sculptural presence, with firm drapery lines that describe the volume of their bodies.

In the ninth century, we see the further development of the figure from the linear to the organic. The aristocratic female figures in a painting in



Fig. 8. After Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406), 6th–7th century. *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies.* Detail, "Family Group." Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 9 13/16 x 137 5/16 in. (24.9 x 347.6 cm). British Museum, London





Fig. 9. *Court Ladies*, T'ang dynasty, ca. 706. Detail from a wall painting from the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai, Ch'ien-hsien, Shensi Province, ink and color, 69¾ x 78 in. (177 x 198 cm). Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian

Fig. 10. Attributed to Chou Fang (ca. 780–ca. 810), late 9th–10th century. *Palace Ladies Wearing Floral Headdresses*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 18 x 70¾ in. (45.7 x 179.6 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shen-yang

Overleaf
Pl. 3. Unidentified artist (mid-12th century). *Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Flight to Shu*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 32⅝ x 44¾ in. (82.8 x 113.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1941 (41.138)

the style of Chou Fang, *Palace Ladies Wearing Floral Headdresses* (fig. 10), adorned with elaborate flowered coiffures and clothed in diaphanous gowns and rich brocades, exemplify the height of opulence and naturalism in figural representation.[21]

Compared with their earlier T'ang counterparts, Chou's women, who are markedly soft and plump, represent an important change in the concept of feminine beauty after the mid-T'ang period. According to the early twelfth-century writer Tung Yu, this new taste for voluptuousness was reflected by the famous beauty Yang Kuei-fei, the favorite consort of the emperor Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–56).[22] Whether or not Tung is correct, it was indeed Chou Fang who immortalized the vogue for sensuous figures in painting. Chou, who became known for the realism of his figures, displayed not only a genius for storytelling but also a deep humanity in the observation of his subjects. In *Palace Ladies Bathing Children*, both the physical type and bodily movements of the figures are suitably matched to their assigned tasks and actions. The woman on the left, for example, perfectly exemplifies the comforting mother to whom a frightened child would run and in whose lap he would bury his face, while the woman administering the bath is just the kind of brisk and competent nurse whose deft efficiency would both protect her charge and get the job well done. As a new figural genre, Chou's art portrays the tender and nurturing aspect of Chinese family life, in which children are protected, loved, and indulged.

A palace seal of the Shao-hsing era (1131–62) dates *Palace Ladies Bathing Children* to before the middle of the twelfth century, when it presumably entered the Southern Sung imperial collection. Compared with *Palace Ladies*

Wearing Floral Headdresses (fig. 10), the drawing is flatter and more calligraphic. Instead of encircling and merging into the forms they describe, the carefully controlled drapery lines are kinesthetically independent. The calligraphic quality of the drawing suggests that the painting is a late Northern Sung Academy copy that faithfully preserves the original forms and composition by Chou Fang. The figures, though placed against a blank background, are convincingly three-dimensional and move freely in space. In comparison, the faces on the fan (fig. 7), in which the figures are more typically Southern Sung, appear bland and expressionless.

Overleaf
Pl. 3. Unidentified artist (mid-12th century). *Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Flight to Shu.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 32⅝ x 44¾ in. (82.8 x 113.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1941 (41.138)

The Emperor Flees

In the last two decades of his reign, the emperor Hsüan-tsung withdrew from daily court affairs, delegating his authority to his ministers and territorial officials. The ensuing struggle between the court officials and the regional commanders led to the revolt of An Lu-shan, the powerful military governor of northeastern China, in the year 755. As rebel forces seized the eastern capital, Lo-yang, and broke the imperial defense at T'ung-kuan Pass, the last stronghold on the road to Ch'ang-an, the mighty T'ang emperor fled the capital in 756 with his family and personal attendants. On their way through precipitous mountain passes to southwestern Shu, angry soldiers mutinied and forced the execution of the emperor's favorite consort, Yang Kuei-fei, who had favored An Lu-shan as an adopted son. The episode became the subject of many later poems and paintings, which both satirized the grandiose decadence and lamented the sudden collapse of the T'ang.

Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Flight to Shu (pl. 3), a mid-twelfth-century literary-narrative screen painting on silk (now mounted as a short hanging scroll) by an early Southern Sung court artist, recounts the story of the T'ang emperor's defeat.[33] Another representation of the subject is seen in *T'ang Ming-huang's Journey to Shu* (fig. 11), a composition in the style of the T'ang court artist Li Ssu-hsün or his son Li Chao-tao.[34] In the twelfth-century painting, the gorgeous procession of armored soldiers and caparisoned horses that wends its way along the mountain pass is as splendidly described as a narrative painting of the Venetian Renaissance. Modern scholars have suggested that the white horse without a rider symbolizes the executed imperial consort, Yang Kuei-fei.[35] In the lower right corner, the distraught emperor, wearing a brilliant red robe (pl. 3a), turns his head to see his mistress once again. The scene echoes the eighth-century poet Po Chü-i's famous ballad "Song of Unending Sorrow":

> His Majesty, covering his face, could not save her,
> He turned to look back, his face streaming with blood and tears . . .
> Under Mount O-mei, a scattering of marching men,
> Flags and banners colorless in the fading sunset.[36]

In composition, *Flight to Shu* derives from Han and T'ang wall paintings. Known as *ch'u-hsing t'u*, or processional painting (figs. 12, 13), the picture

Pl. 3a. Detail, pl. 3







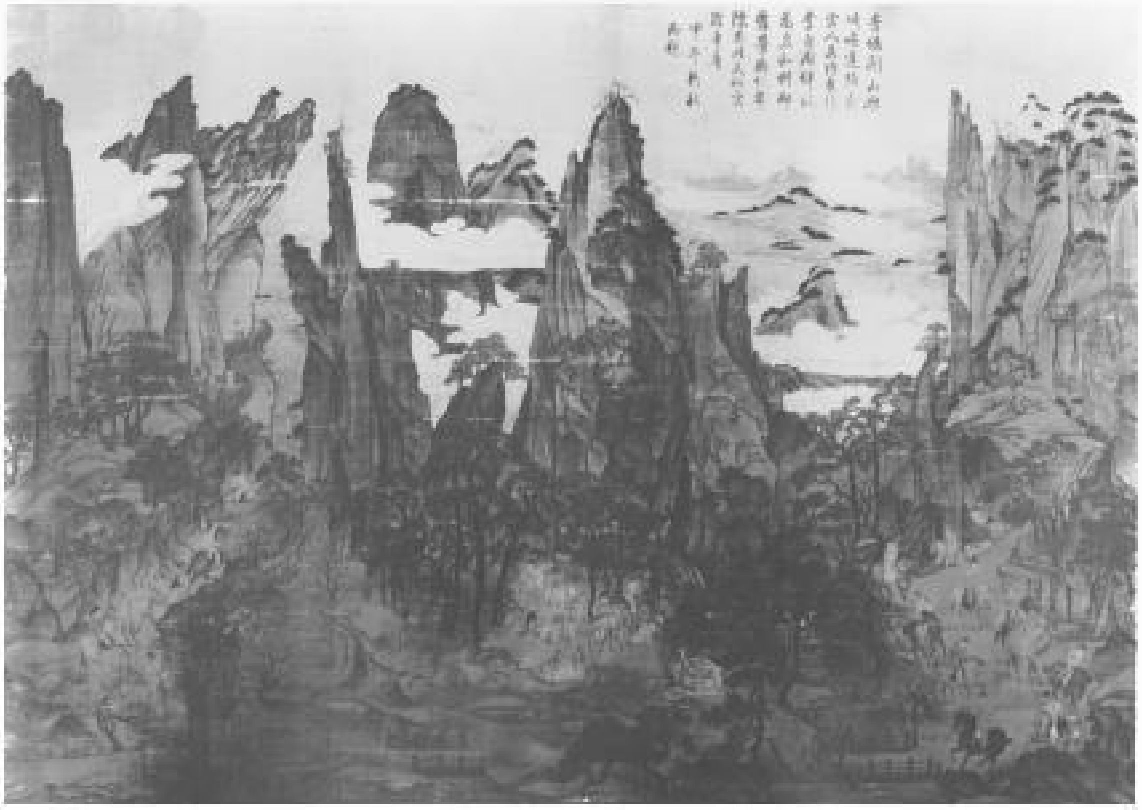
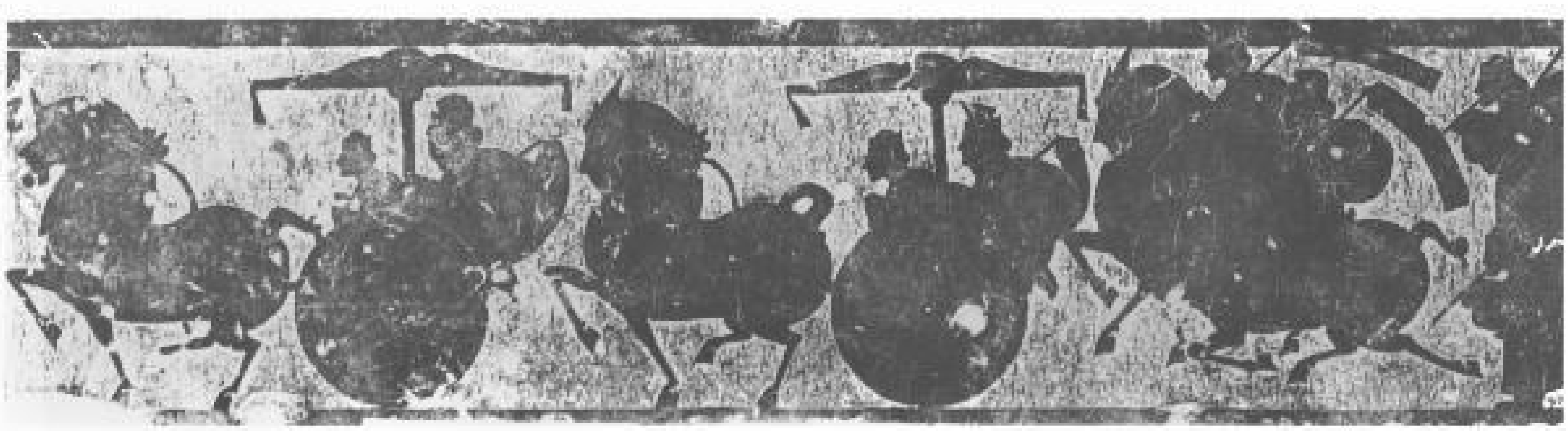


Fig. 11. Unidentified artist (12th century?), in the style of Li Ssu-hsün (651–716) or his son Li Chao-tao (active ca. 670–730). *T'ang Ming-huang's Journey to Shu.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 22 x 31⅞ in. (55.9 x 81 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

shows the parade of a touring grandee, with horses, carriages, and a retinue of heralds, outriders, and guards in full trappings. From ancient times, such public displays of rank and power, regulated by sumptuary laws, had served an important function in the maintenance of social order. In a presentation of a ritual procession, the painter shows not only the spectacle of courtly pageant but an actual diagram of society. His depiction—through costume, insignia, and attitude—of the various individuals in the procession, his observation of the signs of arrival and departure, and his inclusion of other subtle and meaningful details re-create both the historical event and the symbolic moment.[27] In Chinese painting, a scene of departure usually proceeds to the left, while a scene of arrival or return proceeds to the right. In *Flight to Shu*, the procession, moving from right to left, depicts the emperor's flight from the capital, the headlong retreat westward along the mountainous roads of Szechwan. The cavalcade in *Flight to Shu* may be compared with a more formal late T'ang ceremonial procession of a ninth-century wall painting at Tun-huang (fig. 13), which shows the retinue of the Tun-huang governor Chang I-ch'ao, with danc-

Fig. 12. *Outdoor Procession*, Eastern Han dynasty, 147–68. Detail from a rubbing of a stone relief from the Wu Liang shrine, Chia-hsiang, Shantung Province. Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University



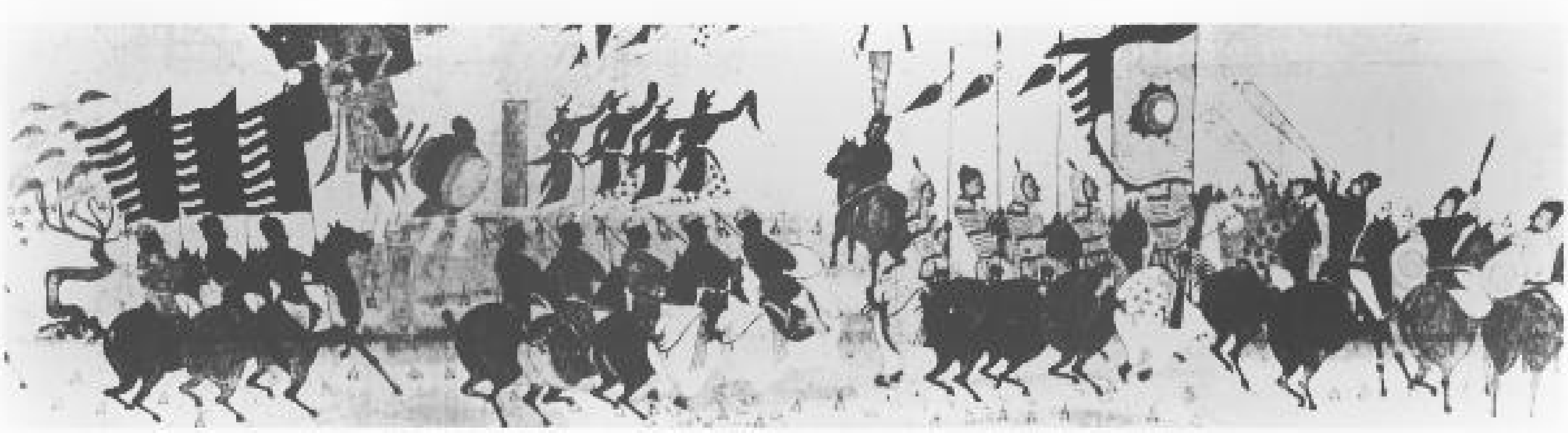
ers, trumpeting heralds, and soldiers with banners and spears. The elaborate landscape background of *Flight to Shu* dates the painting stylistically to the reign of the first Southern Sung emperor, Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62). It was Kao-tsung, who shared with Hsüan-tsung the experience of fleeing from the enemy, who patronized the important revival of history painting in the twelfth century. In *Flight to Shu*, the colorful human drama is viewed against a new, endlessly expanding world of nature—a rugged landscape of magnificent boulders, tall pine trees, rushing streams, and distant mountains—that is at once tumultuous and serene. After the T'ang, as Chinese martial interests waned, the pursuit of military valor was destined to vanish in the twilight of the traditional warrior-hero.

The Hunt

Late T'ang literature and art were pervaded by a new mood of pessimism and despair. After the fall of the T'ang dynasty, the empire, overrun by nomadic invaders from the north, entered a prolonged period of disorder. Central and South China broke up into the so-called Ten (actually fourteen) Kingdoms, while North China was ruled by a series of short-lived dynasties known as the Five Dynasties (907–60). In fifty-three years there were five changes of "imperial" courts, the longest (Later Liang) lasting seventeen years and the shortest (Later Han) only four. With military leaders as rulers, the ancient Confucian social order was swept away. North China, the area around the ancient twin capitals of Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang, which for more than a thousand years had been the seat of imperial power, was devastated by continuous warfare.

Stag Hunt (pl. 4), a short, symbolic narrative handscroll on paper traditionally attributed to Li Tsan-hua (899–936), a late T'ang painter of Khitan (Mongolian) origin, has been reattributed to Huang Tsung-tao, a late Northern Sung (early 12th century) Academy artist who specialized in painting nomads, a subject made popular by Li and other tenth-century artists.[28] The Khitan kingdom, which ruled over much of Manchuria, Mongolia, and northeastern China, had in part adopted the Chinese system of government, but its early chieftains were constantly at war with one another. Li Tsan-hua, the eldest son of the first Khitan ruler, after fleeing to China to seek protection under the Later T'ang (923–36) emperor Ming-tsung (r. 925–33), became a

Fig. 13. *Chang I-ch'ao, Governor of Tun-huang, and His Wife, Lady Sung, on an Outing,* T'ang dynasty, late 9th century. Detail from a wall painting from Cave 156, Tun-huang, Kansu Province





Pl. 4. Attributed to Huang Tsung-tao (active ca. 1120), formerly attributed to Li Tsan-hua (899–936). *Stag Hunt.* Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 9¾ x 30⅞ in. (24.7 x 78.3 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.3.1)

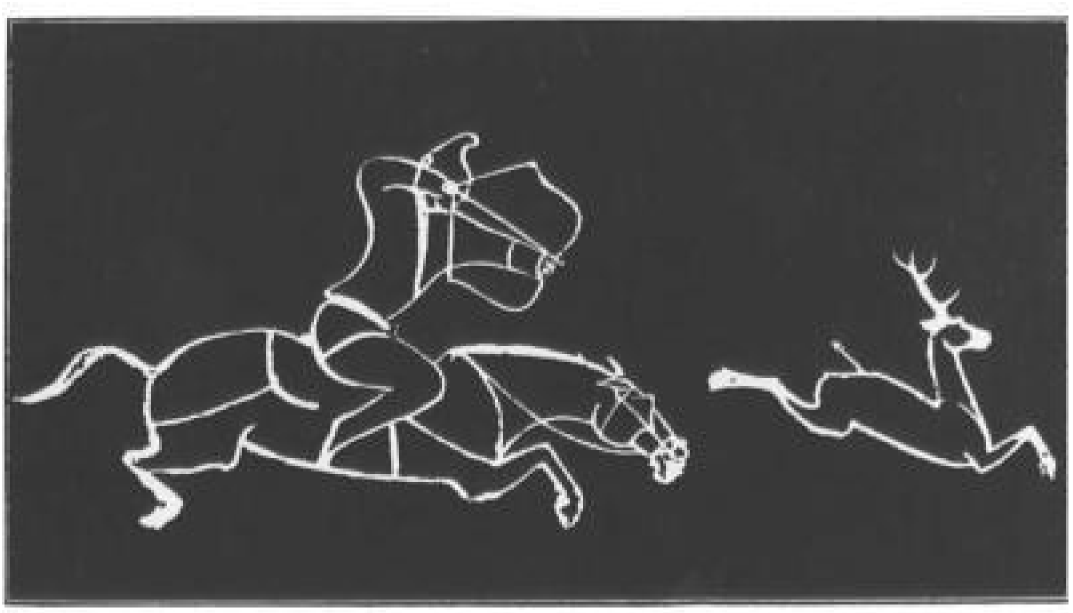


Fig. 14. *Stag Hunt,* Western Han dynasty, 3rd–1st century B.C. Detail from a rubbing of a stamped tomb tile from Lo-yang, Honan Province



leading painter of a special genre that depicted nomadic life in the northern steppes. *Stag Hunt* reproduces an ancient Scythian-Siberian chase scene frequently found in Han art (fig. 14). A handsome Khitan youth riding a menacing dark brown horse charges in full gallop after a fleeing stag that has just been pierced by an arrow. Thrusting forward, his raised right hand, having just released the arrow, is still open, while his left hand, clutching the bow, points ahead. The injured victim, a stunning animal with melting features and soft fur, drops to the ground in a final, desperate leap. The treadmill effect of the horse's hooves, all four spinning in the air, is not unlike the experiments of the Futurists, with simultaneous images to suggest dynamic speed and motion.[29]

The Chinese, an agricultural people, lived in perpetual fear of nomadic invasions from the north. Because of their superior horsemanship and warring skills, the foreign soldiery, from which the rebel An Lu-shan arose, was an important part of the T'ang military. After An's revolt, the T'ang dynasty became entirely dependent on foreign troops, and through the first half of the tenth century, the land was ruled by the military. The establishment of the Sung dynasty in 960 finally set the Chinese Empire on a new course of growth and development. Because of the example of the T'ang collapse under regional military rule, the Sung dynasty pursued a policy of curbing martial power and

subordinating it to civil rule through a centralized imperial bureaucracy, a policy that had a lasting effect on later Chinese history.[30]

The episode of the naturalized Khitan prince Li Tsan-hua fleeing to China as a painter was interpreted as an example of the superiority of the civilized Chinese over the so-called barbarian way of life, and as a victory of the brush over the sword. In a colophon written on the painting, the pacifist Ming scholar-painter Shen Chou (1427–1509) saw *Stag Hunt* as an allegory of violence among contending rulers of the state:

> How vigorous are Tung-tan [Li Tsan-hua] and his horse,
> At the sound of an arrow a stag is shot!
> From past to present, will the stag hunt ever end?
> How the world is upset by the clamorous lot!
> Hunters always win, and will laugh at the old men whose faces
> they have slapped.
> Yet win or lose, life is but an illusory dream.

As a dramatization of the savagery of an aggressor against a victim, the symbolic narrative of *Stag Hunt* is viewed by Shen Chou as a protest against all violence.

In the Palace

With the fall of the T'ang in the early tenth century, there was an exodus of cultivated families to the south and southwest, resulting in a great surge of cultural activity in the Chiang-nan, or "south of the Yangtze River," and Szechwan areas. Indeed, the emperor Li Yü (r. 961–75), who ruled at the Southern T'ang court in Nanking, was himself a poet and an enthusiastic patron of the arts (his collection included Han Kan's *Night-Shining White*). The luxury and opulence of the Southern T'ang court came to be known through the vivid depictions of palace life by Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75), a native of Nanking and a leading court painter. *In the Palace* (pl. 5), now divided

Pl. 5. After Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75). *In the Palace*, before 1140. Handscroll, ink and touches of color on silk, 10½ x 57½ in. (26.5 x 146 cm). Purchase, Douglas Dillon Gift, 1978 (1978.4)



into four sections and preserved in four different museums, is a twelfth-century ink outline copy of a lost handscroll by Chou.[31] Moving from right to left, the horizontal composition, which measures more than fifteen feet in length, offers a narrative of palace life in an open panorama.

According to a colophon dated 1140 by Chang Ch'eng, a nephew of the leading Northern Sung figure painter Li Kung-lin, the copy had been made for him as a gift.[32] The copyist had not attempted to replicate the original, which was in full color; instead, he re-created the composition in Li Kung-lin's famous "plain drawing" (*pai-miao*), or monochromatic ink outline, style. Unlike Han Kan's painting, which features subtly descriptive contour lines, Li's plain drawing displays a calligraphic brushwork, in which the brushstrokes, each with a carefully marked beginning and end, are in themselves distinctive. The brushstrokes in the twelfth-century copy, rather than merging into the forms they describe, re-create the rhythms of the drapery folds; taut and tremulous, they are by themselves expressive of the movement and structure of the body underneath.

In the Palace, in depicting life at the Southern T'ang court, shows, besides a plethora of high-fashion T'ang costumes, coiffures, palace furnishings, and well-groomed parrots and dogs, something extraordinary about Li Yü's court. There, alongside ladies doing their toilet, preening and making themselves beautiful, or otherwise engaged in such pleasant pastimes as catching butterflies and playing with birds and dogs, are women seriously involved in two cultural pursuits, namely, painting and music. At the beginning of the composition, Chou Wen-chü is seen bending over an easel making a portrait of a seated imperial consort. Midway into the scroll are two elegantly staged concerts, one of strings and the other of harp and pipes. In the last scene, the youthful emperor joins a group of ladies in viewing a hanging scroll painting. The handscroll, compared with a fourth-century composition of courtly ladies, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, attributed to Ku K'ai-chih (fig. 15), shows both increased mastery of realism and greater







Pl. 5a. After Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75). Detail from *In the Palace* (pl. 5)



Fig. 15. After Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406), 6th–7th century. *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies.* Detail, "Toilet Scene." Handscroll, ink and color on silk, $9\frac{13}{16}$ x $137\frac{1}{16}$ in. (24.9 x 348.1 cm). British Museum, London

psychological acuity. The palace inhabitants, cushioned in soft living, reflect an existence of languor and boredom. In rejuvenating the older work with the technique of plain drawing, the twelfth-century artist chose not to re-create the physical splendor of the Five Dynasties original but rather to capture its subtle character portrayals.

The ill-fated Li Yü, who came to the Southern T'ang throne in 961 and surrendered his kingdom to the Sung in 975, was murdered in captivity three years later by the Sung ruler. Known for his taste for excessive, luxurious living, he was, nevertheless, also renowned as a great composer of lyric songs. He is recognized by modern scholars as the key *tz'u* poet at the end of the T'ang dynasty. In expressing nostalgia for his lost empire, Li the lyric poet "wept like a child." Yet, as the eminent early twentieth-century *tz'u* scholar Wang Kuo-wei wrote,

> The *tz'u* poet is a man who has not lost the child within him. To have lived in the inner court and grown up under the care of women may have weakened Li Yü in his ability to serve as a king, but it strengthened him as a poet.[33]

The life of Li Yü, who is remembered more as a tragic poet than as a failed ruler, signals the emergence of a new lyric aesthetic that, developing during the Northern Sung, changed the course not only of poetry but of painting as well.[34]

For all their dignified demeanor and perfect decorum, the denizens of the palace, enlivened by occasional soft chatter, are animated and intensely human, their emotions conveyed through gesture and facial expression. One scene, for example, shows a woman looking on as her daughter's hair is combed by an attendant (pl. 5a). The bored matron stands impatiently with her arms folded and eyes shut, her ample and imperious figure in striking contrast with that of the humble maidservant, who follows behind with eyes lowered, while angular drapery lines swirling around her body effectively signal her ill temper.

A Literary Gathering

Scholars of the Liu-li Hall (pl. 6), a late thirteenth-century copy of a tenth-century handscroll by Chou Wen-chü, has preserved the general appearance of Chou's full color style.[35] An early example of a literary gathering in a garden setting, the painting is said to represent the eighth-century scholar-official poet Wang Ch'ang-ling and his friends, who regularly held such gatherings at Wang's official residence in Chiang-ning (modern Nanking). Furniture and writing implements have been moved outdoors, where the host, Wang Ch'ang-ling, formally dressed in the scholar-official's hat and robe, sits by a table talking to three seated guests. Two attendants stand quietly to one side. The Buddhist monk who faces Wang, seated in a rustic garden chair—the use of the chair having first been introduced to China from Central Asia in the tenth century—has been identified as Fa-shen, a cleric who successfully combined Confucian and Buddhist teachings and became an esteemed member of Wang's literary coterie.[36] Farther into the scroll two poets, one leaning on a garden rock and the other against a tree, ponder a line of poetry, while a young servant prepares ink. At the far left, another two poets, seated on a rock, read a poem from a scroll.

Scholars of the Liu-li Hall shows how Chou Wen-chü's tenth-century style has been transformed by a thirteenth-century copyist. While the scholars' hats and dresses are T'ang, their features are drawn more in the manner of late Sung; compared with earlier representations, they are more schematic and the brushwork is faster and more calligraphic in feeling. The faces, however, in contrast to those in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ming paintings, are solidly and three-dimensionally constructed, the drawing conveying a sense of bone structure and volume. The eyelid has a rising double curvature, to suggest the bulging eyeball underneath. The thirteenth-century artist's rendition of Chou Wen-chü's tremulous brushline is a virtuoso performance, the elegant fluttering lines at once playful and confident, though here more complex and mannered, in a style typically identified with figure painting of the late Southern Sung Academy. Similarly, hooks and curves that represent creases and pockets in the drapery show an extravagant realism matched only by the best figural representations of the late Southern Sung, such as Li Sung's *Knickknack Peddler* (pl. 63).



Pl. 6. After Chou Wen-chü (active ca. 940–75). *Scholars of the Liu-li Hall*, late 13th century. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 49½ x 12⅜ in. (125.7 x 34 cm). Gift of Sheila Riddell, in memory of Sir Percival David, 1977 (1977.49)

The garden scene in *Scholars of the Liu-li Hall* reflects the emergence of a new literary society in the late T'ang and early Sung periods, in which Confucianists, Taoists, and Buddhists mingled freely, creating a harmonized synthesis of the three philosophies. Confucianism and Taoism are the oldest Chinese systems of ethics and philosophy. The sphere of Confucianism is the human world and the social obligations of people to one another based on principles of good conduct. Taoism, expressive of the duality in the Chinese world view, is more mystical. The Taoist ignores social obligations. Instead, he conforms to the underlying pattern of the universe, the Tao or Way, by complying with the impulses of his own essential nature. And Buddhism, introduced to China in the first century A.D., with its emphasis on human suffering and the illusory nature of the world, lends a third, spiritual dimension to Chinese thought. The decline of the Confucian moral and social order after the breakup of the Han Empire led the Chinese, in the fourth and fifth centuries, to turn from the world of human affairs to seek spiritual enlightenment in Buddhism and Taoism. But the Buddhist denial of the world was fundamentally opposed to the basic Chinese values of family and social obligation, and the long political and ideological struggle between the Taoists and the Confucianists, on one hand, and the Buddhists, on the other, resulted in anti-Buddhist persecutions in the fifth, sixth, and ninth centuries.

By the late T'ang, a rapprochement was sought by both sides. Ch'an (Zen, in Japanese) Buddhism survived the persecution of 845 to emerge as a vigorous movement, a school of Buddhism that eschewed formal doctrine in favor of intuitive, unmediated experience. Meanwhile, Neo-Confucianism, first



developed during the late T'ang as a Confucian response to Buddhist metaphysics and scholastic philosophy, was influenced by Buddhist thought. Those Buddhists who successfully sought the company of the scholar-officials during this period were the lettered Ch'an monks, who were well versed in the Confucian classics. It was in the Neo-Confucian literary garden, portrayed here, that Buddhism finally joined with and became part of mainstream Chinese thought.

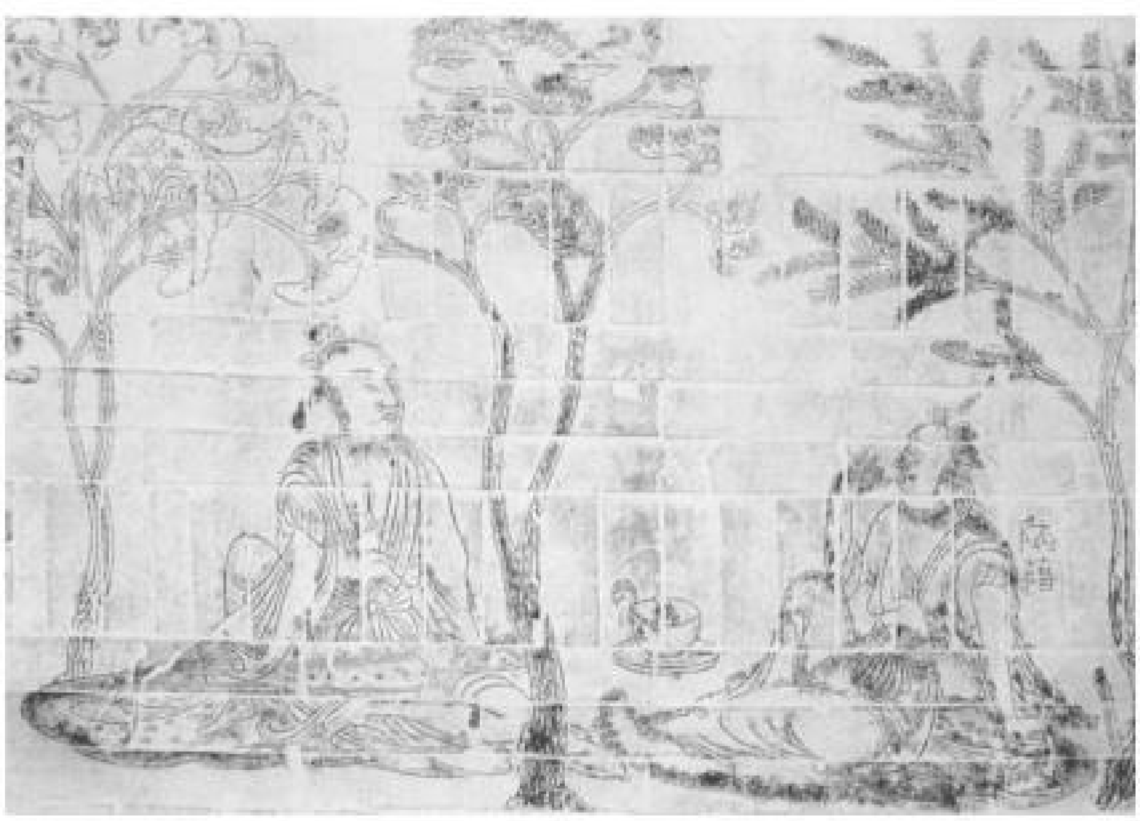


Fig. 16. *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Jung Ch'i-ch'i*, Eastern Tsin dynasty 317–420. Detail from a rubbing of a molded-brick relief from a tomb at Hsi-shan-ch'iao, Nanking. Jiangsu Provincial Museum, Nanking



Map 2. Political Boundaries of the Sung Dynasty, ca. 1050

The creation of gardens is an ancient Chinese tradition. During the T'ang, the eastern capital, Lo-yang, was a center of famous gardens created for members of the imperial family and high government officials.[57] Earlier gardens in the north were known for their rare flowers; the gardens in the south were built around ornamental rocks. After migrating to the south in the tenth century, the rising scholar-official class increasingly used the open setting of the private garden for entertaining and literary gatherings. Pictorially, the scholar in the garden harks back to the image of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, seen here in a molded-brick relief from a fifth-century tomb in Nanking (fig. 16), which shows a scholar sitting beneath a tree on a leopard skin.[58] Similarly, in *Scholars of the Liu-li Hall*, Wang Ch'ang-ling and his friends are seated on garden rocks covered with animal skins, while the priest in the chair recalls a portrait of a seated Ch'an patriarch. The conversation group further evokes images of Ch'an Encounter (*Ch'an-hui t'u*) paintings (pl. 77), which commemorate the exchanges between famous Buddhist and Confucian scholars.

Scholar-Officials

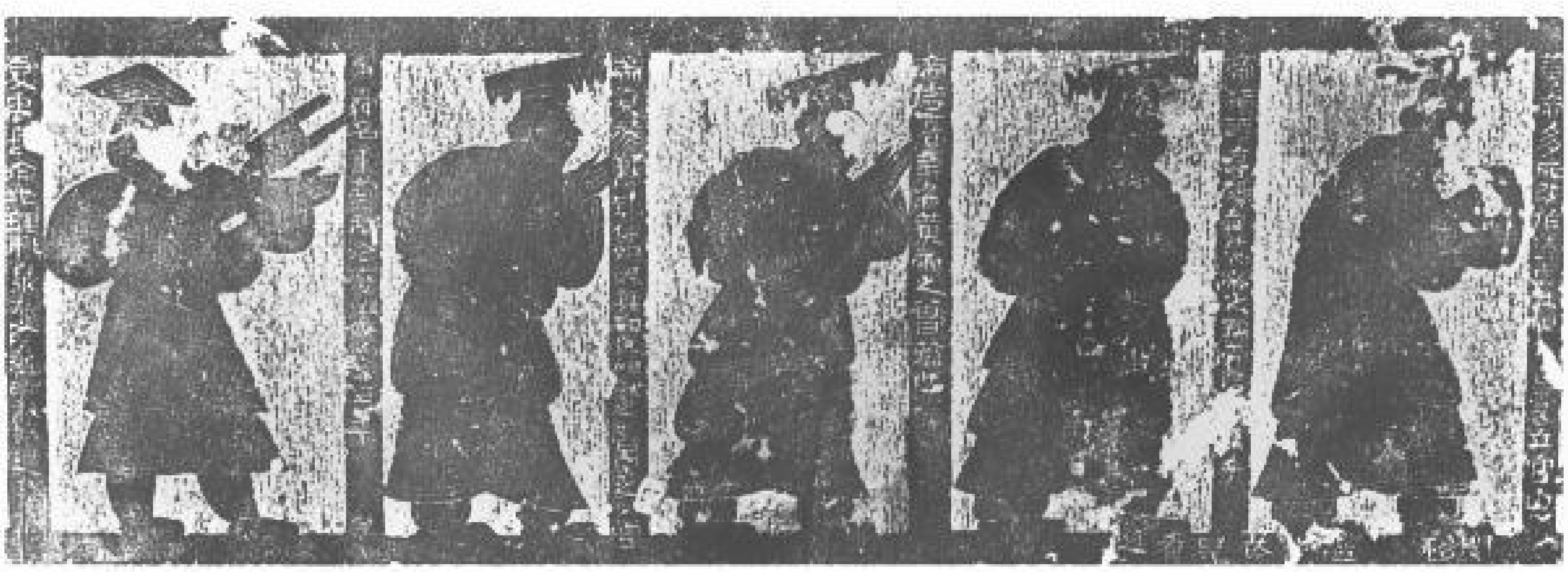
Two opposing theories of government dominated early Chinese political history. The Legalists (3rd century B.C.) advocated absolute power for the ruler and total obedience from the governed; Confucius, on the other hand, urged

that government be entrusted to the virtuous and the wise. In the theory of the Mandate of Heaven, propounded by the latter view, the emperor was regarded as the Son of Heaven by adoption only, and subject to being ousted if he failed in his duties. Under the Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), the Legalist absolutism created by the Ch'in (221–206 B.C.) was modified by a Confucian humanism that stressed the virtue ethic. This combination of absolutism with the virtue ethic became the unique political legacy of China's Confucian state.

Until the end of the T'ang, in the early tenth century, the ruling class was composed largely of aristocratic families, often of military descent. In order to avoid the T'ang mistake of investing too much power in regional military governors, the first Sung emperor, T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), staffed a centralized government bureaucracy entirely with scholar-officials chosen through an examination system perfected during the late T'ang and early Sung periods. The examination, open to all commoners, encouraged ambitious young men to participate in state affairs. There were many kinds of examinations and several other methods of recruitment. The most prestigious was the rigorous *chin-shih*, or "presented scholar," degree, which took place (after 1067) triennially as the culmination of a three-stage process, in which candidates had to pass examinations at the prefectural, municipal, and palace levels.[19] By the second half of the eleventh century, few men without a *chin-shih* degree could attain a high rank in government.

The Sung Empire was in important ways greatly changed from the T'ang. The location of the capital, Pien-ching (modern K'ai-feng, Honan Province), a few miles south of the Yellow River, reflected the shift southward of the political, economic, and cultural center of the empire, from the North China plain to the rich, rice-growing area of the lower Yangtze delta in the south (Map 2, p. 42). The empire was more prosperous than ever before. Between the late eighth and the eleventh century, the population more than doubled, growing to perhaps more than one hundred million by the late Northern Sung. With an active cash economy came a tremendous expansion of commerce and trade; and technological advances in agriculture, mining, textiles, and lacquer and

Fig. 17. *Portraits of the Five Emperors*, Eastern Han dynasty, ca. 147–51. Detail from a rubbing of a stone relief from the Wu Liang shrine, Chia-hsiang, Shantung Province. Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University



porcelain production, as well as the development of printing, spurred growth in general productivity and cultural life. Pien-ching, linked by the Grand Canal to the south, was a bustling city of perhaps one million people. It is not surprising that sophisticated urban dwellers, who preferred luxury and ease, encouraged civil and artistic accomplishments, often at the expense of military competence.[40]

One result of the new focus on the ideology of *wen*, or civil values, as a moral and cultural order was that the Sung dynasty was militarily weak and thus in constant jeopardy of invasions from the north. With the waning of the military aristocracy, curbed initially beginning in the eighth century, through changes in the land-tax system and fiscal control, and the Sung policy of subordinating the military to the civil bureaucracy, political power came to be concentrated in the court. The scholar-bureaucrats, relying solely on the emperor to promote their interests, both supported and helped the growth of imperial absolutism under the Sung. Through the examination system and sponsorship by high officials, men of talent and ambition were quickly placed in positions of responsibility. When the emperor was pleased, promotion to high office was swift; failure to succeed brought dismissal or exile.

The civil examinations produced about two hundred *chin-shih* candidates each year. There were some twenty thousand regular imperial officials, of whom about two thousand were at court. The remaining eighteen thousand, disseminated throughout the empire, ruled the land with the help of local gentry and locally recruited subofficial government clerks.[41] Thus, the imperial officialdom was a thinly spread governmental superstructure at the top, heavily dependent on the Confucian virtue ethic as the binding social force for maintaining stability.

Five Old Men of Sui-yang (pl. 7), painted before 1056, commemorates the lives of five distinguished scholar-officials who retired to live in Sui-yang (modern Shang-ch'iu, Honan Province).[42] All five men achieved high office under the Northern Sung emperors Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022) and Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63). Tu Yen (978–1057), aged eighty, was Grand Councillor; Wang Huan, aged ninety, was Vice Minister of Rites; Pi Shih-ch'ang (whose portrait is shown here), aged ninety-four, was Minister of the Treasury; Chu Kuan, aged eighty-eight and a native of Sui-yang, was Director of Military Personnel; and Feng P'ing, aged eighty-seven, was Director of Equipment in the Ministry of War. The portraits show the figures in standing pose, in a three-quarter view facing either right or left, wearing informal (that is, not official court) gowns with round or open neck, a sash around the waist, and a cylindrical or tiered scholar's square cap.

Commemorative portraits first appeared during the Han dynasty, when the emperors Hsüan-ti (r. 74–49 B.C.) and Ming-ti (r. A.D. 57–75) had portraits of worthies displayed in the Unicorn Pavilion and the Cloud Terrace of the imperial palace.[43] In the Wu Liang shrine, dating to about A.D. 147 (fig. 17), we see portraits (not unlike those of the Five Old Men of Sui-yang) representing the mythical ancient rulers the Three Sovereigns and Five

Pl. 7. Unidentified artist (11th century). *Portrait of Pi Shih-ch'ang*, before 1056. From the set *Five Old Men of Sui-yang*. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 15¾ x 12⅝ in. (40 x 32 cm). Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.170.1)


司農卿致仕畢世長九十四歲

Emperors standing in a row.[44] The standing pose was traditionally preferred for commemorative formal portraits of ancient worthies and meritorious officials that were displayed in ceremonial halls or temples. Mounted originally as a handscroll, *Five Old Men of Sui-yang* was accompanied by a preface (now in the Metropolitan Museum), dated 1056, by Ch'ien Ming-i, a pupil of Tu Yen, along with five poems by the five men represented and encomiums by seventeen contemporary notables, all major figures in the late Northern Sung world of politics, letters, and philosophy. Until the nineteenth century, the portraits were kept by descendants of two of the subjects, Pi Shih-ch'ang and Chu Kuan. As scholars and collectors continued to add their comments and praises to these paintings, close to one hundred recorded colophons spanning nine hundred years made them among the most well documented works in art history.

Executed by a highly skilled professional portrait painter in a firm and confident hand, *Five Old Men of Sui-yang* shows an excellent likeness of the subjects, the brushlines carefully controlled and subordinated to the human and drapery forms they represent. The technique of Sung and Yüan portrait art (fig. 18) is described by the fourteenth-century Yüan portrait painter Wang I (active ca. 1360), who explains that in drawing the face one starts with the nose, like the "root of a mountain," then adds the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth around the nose, and finishes by delineating the facial contour.[45] In this way, the facial features are built up three-dimensionally, as in a sculpture, with a good sense of bone structure. Dressed in fine black silk gauze, in the fashion of retired gentlemen of the time, the old men of Sui-yang, reflecting the Sung taste, are elegantly rather than opulently attired, dignified but subdued.

For Sung scholar-bureaucrats, official life was so often volatile and unpredictable that the very fact that all five men had achieved both high rank and longevity was truly remarkable.[46] In the preface to the portraits, Ch'ien Ming-i observes, "To achieve an honorable name and finish one's career gracefully is extremely difficult in life."[47] In another colophon, dated 1138, Ch'ien Tuan-li, in addressing a descendant of Pi Shih-ch'ang, sums up his feelings of admiration as follows:

> Lord Pi, being the most advanced in age, clearly surpasses the others in his control of mind and in self-discipline. Although the way he has grown old, retired, and avoided problems exemplifies [his wisdom], it is no idle talk to say that such a man of benevolence will enjoy longevity, and such a man of virtue will have progeny![48]

Thus did the admirers of the Five Old Men of Sui-yang express the popular Chinese sentiment and devout hope that long life and progeny are a virtuous man's just rewards.

The Classic of Filial Piety

The Northern Sung period (960–1127) was a golden age of art and cultural development, with men of government and politics commonly partaking in the



Fig. 18. Detail, pl. 7

world of arts and letters. One such scholar-official, and the greatest figural and narrative painter of the Sung dynasty, was Li Kung-lin, who lived from about 1041 to 1106. He was also a calligrapher, a writer of prose, and a poet, and he collected paintings and works of antiquity. Only three handscrolls are generally accepted as his sole surviving works: *Pasturing Horses*, a handscroll of ink drawing with light colors on silk now in the Beijing Palace Museum, which follows the style of the eighth-century T'ang master Wei Yen; the *Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g), a long handscroll in the plain drawing (*pai-miao*), or monochromatic ink outline, style on silk; and *Five Tribute Horses*, a handscroll of plain drawing on paper, supposedly destroyed in World War II but rumored



to be in Japan.[49] In the *Classic of Filial Piety*, Li Kung-lin, in a departure from the work of the traditional professional artists, created the archetypal calligraphy and painting of the late Northern Sung scholar-official (*shih-ta-fu*) movement.[50]

The *Classic of Filial Piety* was originally composed between 350 and 200 B.C. The text takes the form of a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Tseng-tzu on the meaning and application of filial piety, which was considered "the root of all virtue, from which all teaching grows."[51] In A.D. 722, the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung authorized an imperial edition of the text, for which he wrote a commentary and a preface. After the collapse of social order during the Five Dynasties period (907–60), Northern Sung scholars and thinkers sought to rejuvenate the Confucian ethic by extolling the virtues of the so-called Five Relationships: love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, respect between husband and wife, the predominance of the old over the young, and trust between friends. Filial piety was considered the primary virtue, of cardinal importance to all five relationships. As Neo-Confucianism grew into a political orthodoxy during the Southern Sung in the thirteenth century, the *Classic of Filial Piety* officially became one of the thirteen classics to compose the Neo-Confucian canon.

Painted by Li Kung-lin in early 1085, apparently for personal rather than official use, during a schism within the Confucian state between the ruling imperial and the humanist scholar-official ideologies, the *Classic of Filial Piety* became a metaphor of the Sung Neo-Confucian world. Although illustrations of the *Classic* had existed as early as the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), all illustrations after the Northern Sung follow those by Li.[52]

The text, transcribed by Li in an archaizing "small regular" (*hsiao-k'ai*) script, is divided into eighteen sections. After the "Introduction" are five essays that enumerate the importance of filial piety for the five social classes: the "Son of Heaven," "Princes," "Ministers," "Scholars," and "Commoners." These are followed by twelve essays that describe the various manifestations and benefits of filial piety: "Three Cardinal Resources: Heaven, Earth, and Man," "Filial Rule," "Sage's Rule," "Filial Conduct," "Five Punishments," "The Fundamental Way," "The Perfect Virtue," "The Spreading Fame," "Remonstration," "Affecting Response," "Serving His Sovereign," and "Mourning the Parent."[53] According to Confucius, the scholar's journey through life evolves progressively from self-cultivation (*hsiu-sheng*), to keeping his home in order (*ch'i-chia*), to serving the state (*chih-kuo*), and finally, to keeping the world in peace (*p'ing t'ien-hsia*).[54] The lesson of the *Classic of Filial Piety* is simple but all-embracing: beginning humbly at home, filial piety not only ensures success in the various stages of the individual's life but also brings peace and harmony to the state and to the world at large.

In Chapter 12, "The Fundamental Way," the *Classic of Filial Piety* teaches that the path to good government and social order begins with proper ritual behavior in everyday life, which in turn ensures harmonious relations both at home and in society:

Pls. 8a–g. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Classic of Filial Piety*, ca. 1085. Handscroll, ink on silk, 8⅝ x 187¼ in. (21.9 x 475.5 cm). From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Promised Gift of Oscar L. and Jack C. Tang

Pl. 8a. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 12, "The Fundamental Way"

> For the security of the ruler and the good government of the people there is nothing more efficacious than ritual propriety [*li*]. Ritual propriety means simple reverence [*ching*]. When a father is revered, all sons are happy; when an older brother is revered, all younger brothers are happy; when a sovereign is revered, all subjects are happy; when the One Man is revered, all the multitudes are happy. Those who are revered are few, but those who are made happy by it are many. This is what is meant by the Fundamental Way.[55]

Li Kung-lin's illustration (pl. 8a) shows a man bowing deeply to his older brother. Behind them stand two witnesses, nodding their approval. The setting is a family garden court with a large garden rock shaded by bamboo. In the distance, beyond the garden wall, wild geese frolic by a stream. Barnhart has suggested that the bowing figures may be portraits of the two brothers Su Shih (1037–1101) and Su Ch'e (1039–1112), who were widely known as paragons of fraternal love.[56] In representing these famous contemporary scholars, Li addresses himself directly to his own circle of friends, the scholar-officials of the capital, whose tribulations in official life are thoughtfully considered by Li in his illustrations to Chapter 15, "Remonstration," and Chapter 17, "Serving His Sovereign."

Because filial piety as the basis for social and cosmic order turns on human relations, Li Kung-lin focuses on the different kinds of meetings between people, studying the various forms of ritual obeisance and salutation—from prostration before Heaven and the sovereign and formal greetings between people of different social stations, to informal bowing between friends or strangers who pass one another on the road. At the most exalted level is the symbolic meeting of the emperor as the Son of Heaven with Heaven on high. Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule," deals with the most important of the state rituals, the imperial sacrifice to Heaven:

> The Duke of Chou used to sacrifice to Hou-chi at the suburban altar as the Coadjutor of Heaven; he honored and sacrificed to King Wen in the Bright Hall as the Coadjutor of the Supreme Lord on High.[57]

Of all the state rituals, none was more important than the sacrifice to Heaven at the round altar in the southern outskirts of the capital at the time of the winter solstice, for it was through this ceremony that the emperor reaffirmed his link with Heaven, Earth, and the imperial ancestors.[58] From as early as the T'ang dynasty (618–906), the above passage from the *Classic of Filial Piety* played a pivotal role in court deliberations on the particulars of the imperial sacrifice to Heaven, which was the principal ritual for the legitimation of dynastic authority.[59] Hou-chi, to whom the Duke of Chou sacrifices as Coadjutor of Heaven, was the legendary ancestor of the Chou dynasty rulers (ca. 11th century B.C.–256 B.C.) and the mythical originator of agriculture; King Wen was the founder of the Chou dynasty. The state ritual of the sacrifice to the lineal imperial ancestor in his capacity as Coadjutor of Heaven thus served to reaffirm the Mandate of Heaven.

In Li Kung-lin's illustration of the sacrifice (pl. 8b), at the head of a long stairway on top of an open altar in the form of a primitive mound, the emperor and his chief ritual officer are shown kneeling in front of an altar. At the center of the altar is placed a jade *pi*, symbol of the spirit-throne of Hou-chi. Hovering above the altar are the signs of the constellations, which symbolize other heavenly deities, and both atop and around the altar mound oil lamps burn brightly. In this reenactment of the cosmic mystery, the prostrate emperor, sovereign of men—here facing north in his role as subject—crosses into the sacred zone, thereby regenerating himself as the Son of Heaven, the link between this world and the powers on high.

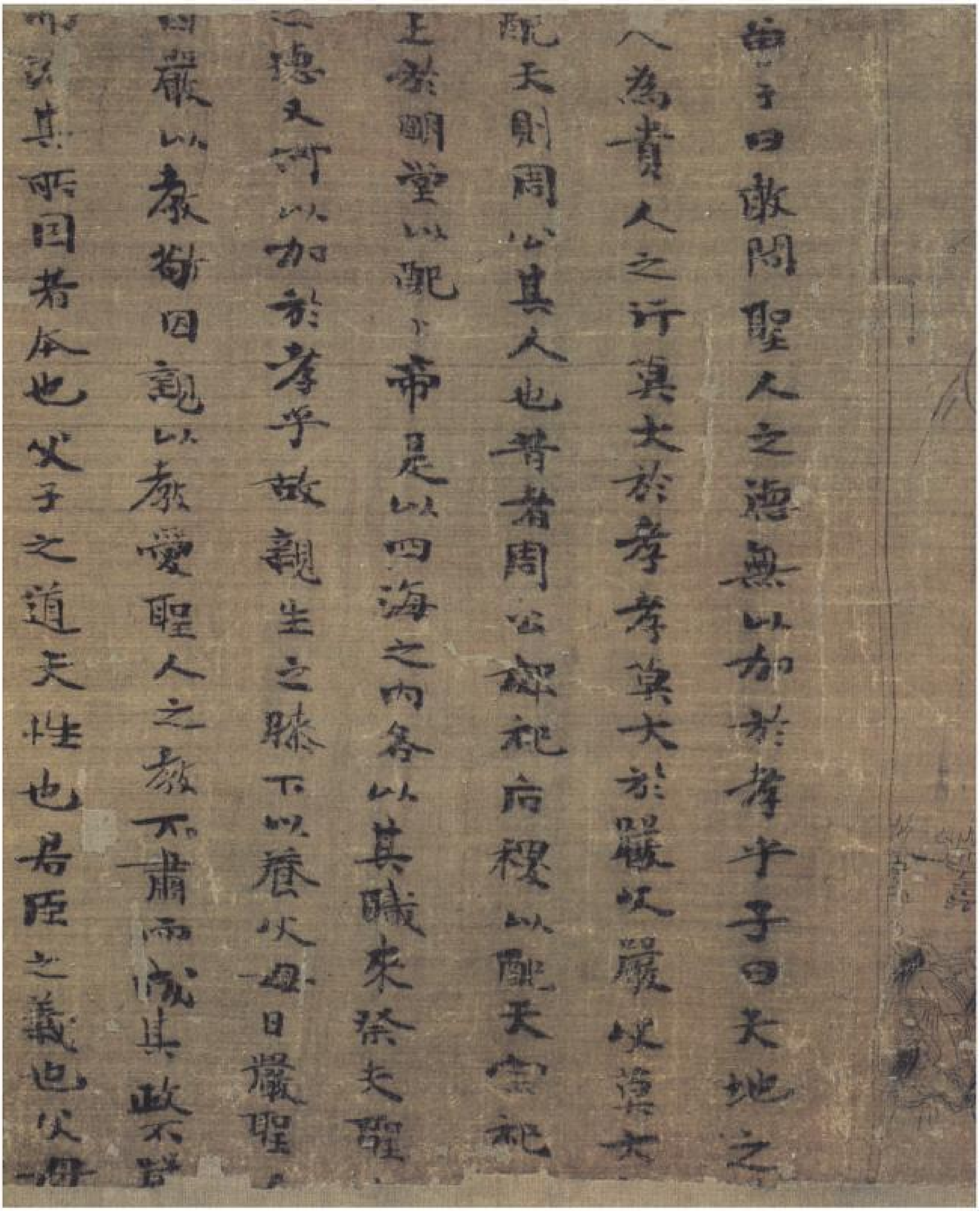
Unlike the Japanese imperial house, which claims direct descent from the Sun Goddess, the emperors of China had to deal with the problem of dynastic succession and legitimation. Throughout Chinese history, the less politically secure rulers—in particular, the two usurper rulers, Wang Mang (r. A.D. 9–23) of the Han dynasty and Empress Wu (r. 690–705) of the T'ang—turned to the revival of an architectural symbol of the ancestral Ming-t'ang, the Bright Hall or Hall of Light, as a means of sanctioning their pursuit of absolutist power. The ancestral Ming-t'ang, a magical cosmic house, was said to have originated at the time of the mythical Yellow Emperor. It was described only as a structure of several rooms—three, five, nine, or twelve—with a simple thatched roof.[60] During the early Northern Sung, triennial sacrifices to Heaven were first held at an open-air suburban altar. But in 1050, during the reign of the emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63), it was decided, after lengthy debate at court, that the sacrifice should be made at the Ming-t'ang in the imperial palace compound in the fall rather than on the winter solstice, and that during the ritual the spirit-tablets of the three preceding Sung emperors, T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97), and Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022), should be placed on the altar and the emperors, as imperial ancestors, worshiped as Coadjutors of Heaven and Earth. The ancient open-air ceremony was thus moved indoors to the Ming-t'ang as ancestral temple, and Heaven itself came to be worshiped as an imperial ancestor, thus further enhancing the authority of the emperor.[61]

Li Kung-lin shows the Ming-t'ang sacrifice in his illustration for Chapter 16, "Affecting Response," which extols the affective powers of the ruler's filial piety:

> If the king shows filial piety to his father, he will serve Heaven with enlightenment; if he shows filial piety to his mother, he will serve Earth with clear understanding; when the older and younger generations achieve harmony, there will be order between those above and those below.[62]

In his illustration (pl. 8c), Li Kung-lin shows the emperor and empress dressed in full regalia standing in front of the Ming-t'ang. A kneeling ritual officer tends to the offering in front of two rows of ancestral spirit-tablets. The contrast between this scene and that of the open-air sacrifice is carefully delineated.

Overleaf
Pl. 8b. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule"



曾子曰敢問聖人之德無以加於孝乎子曰天地之
人為貴人之行莫大於孝孝莫大於嚴父嚴父莫大
配天則周公其人也昔者周公郊祀后稷以配天宗祀
王於明堂以配上帝是以四海之內各以其職來祭夫聖
之德又何以加於孝乎故親生之膝下以養父母日嚴聖
因嚴以教敬因親以教愛聖人之教不肅而成其政不嚴
治其所因者本也父子之道天性也君臣之義也父母



In place of the primitive mound, where the prostrate ruler was a suppliant immersed in the heavenly mystery, is the Ming-t'ang, a public theater of pomp and ceremony, where the emperor assumes his customary position, facing south in his capacity as ruler and Son of Heaven. Thus, Heaven itself, behind them in the ancestral temple, is now enshrined.[63]

Although the emperor's authority was considered absolute in theory, both the ideology and the institution of the Confucian state ensured that it did not always go unchecked in practice. In Sung officialdom, as in earlier times, the institutional check to executive power was the Censorate, which served as the watchdog not only over the Grand Councillor as the chief minister but also over the emperor himself. The efficacy of the system, however, depended largely on the stature and courage of the individuals who spoke out and the way policy differences were resolved. In Chapter 15, the importance of remonstration is explained:

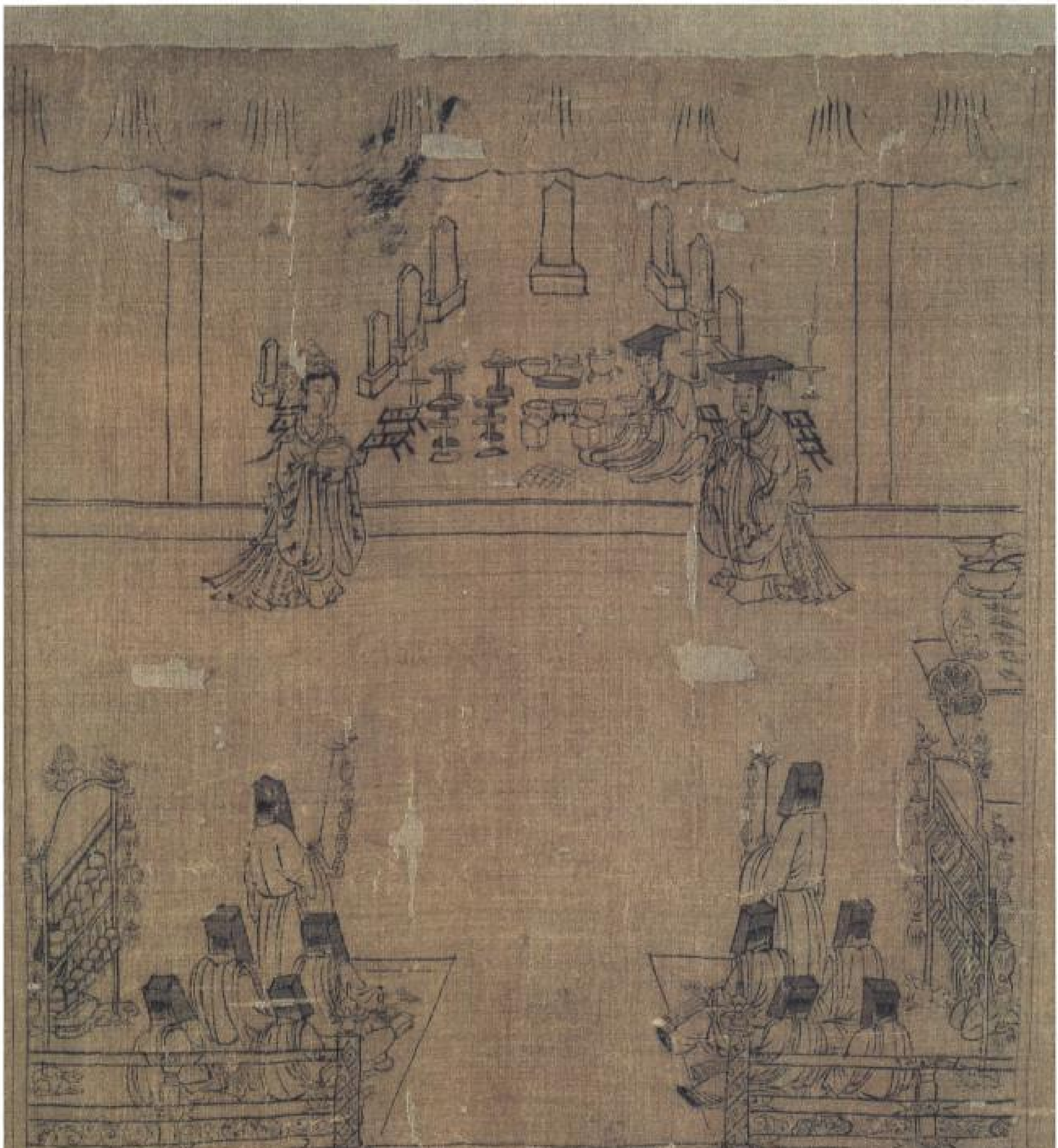
> In ancient times, if the Son of Heaven had seven ministers who would remonstrate with him, although he had not the right methods of government, he would not lose possession of his kingdom. . . . The father who had a son who would remonstrate with him would not sink into the gulf of unrighteous deeds. Therefore, in the case of unrighteous conduct, a son must by no means restrain himself from remonstrating with his father, nor a minister from remonstrating with his ruler.[64]

In Li's illustration (pl. 8d), we are witness to a scene of tense confrontation between the power of the state and the power of moral virtue. The minister, bowing low, firmly stands his ground before the angry sovereign, who sits rigidly upright, pushing down on his thighs in an attitude of intense displeasure.

During the reigns of the emperors Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63) and Ying-tsung (r. 1063–67), remonstration with the throne was on occasion carried out with success by capable ministers. But as problems of national security and reform became increasingly complicated, policy disagreements among officials degenerated into factional wrangling. In the 1060s, because the old emperor Jen-tsung was without an heir, the court was nearly torn apart, first over the question of succession and then by the ensuing debate over the status of Prince Pu, the natural father of the new emperor, Ying-tsung. Wang Fu-chih (1619–1692), the foremost early Ch'ing scholar of the Sung dynasty, viewed the court debates that began in the 1030s as the start of the factional struggles which eventually brought down the imperial house of the Northern Sung.[65] Wang argued that the censor system worked best under the T'ang, when "the chief minister was appointed by the emperor and the censors reported to the chief minister, though it was the duty of the censors to remonstrate with the emperor." That way, "a circle of governance was achieved, and the remonstration process worked effectively." But from the time of the emperor Jen-tsung,

> The chief minister and the censors took up adversarial positions and engaged in bitter arguments at court. . . . In the extreme, they attacked each other for purposes of personal gain. Subversive ministers would

Pl. 8c. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 16, "Affecting Response"





plant sycophants in the Censorate to stir up agitation. . . . The chief minister would in turn find fault with the censors and, working through the inner palace [that is, through the eunuchs], use the emperor's authority to strike back.[66]

Another complicating factor in Northern Sung court politics was the not infrequent presence of the power-wielding dowager empress. In the illustration, the formidable empress stands beside the seated sovereign. After the emperor Jen-tsung ascended the throne in 1022, his mother, the dowager empress Liu, ruled as regent for ten years. In 1063, with the accession to the throne by the new emperor, Ying-tsung, the dowager empress Ts'ao (Jen-tsung's wife) became regent. When Ying-tsung died suddenly in 1067, it was only by the courageous intervention of the chief minister, Han Ch'i, that the succession of the next emperor, Shen-tsung (Ying-tsung's son, r. 1067–85), was secured. Although Li's illustration of the remonstrating minister may not necessarily refer to a particular chief minister, the terror felt by an official who would dare to disagree with the sovereign in the presence of the forbidding dowager empress would hardly have been lost on a contemporary viewer.

The most vexing of the scholar-official's predicaments was whether to serve the emperor or to abstain from service. Chapter 17, "Serving His Sovereign," reads:

> The superior man serves his sovereign in such a way that when he advances at court, he thinks only of discharging his duties to the fullest, and when he retires, he reflects on amending his errors.[67]

In Li's illustration (pl. 8e), a spume of cloud divides the picture diagonally into two halves. Above, a scholar-official is shown at court; and below, the same man, alone in his private garden, contemplates "amending his errors." This melancholy representation of official life reflects the Northern Sung scholar's deep feeling of ambivalence, his desire to serve and his equally strong desire not to serve. According to the classic *Commentary of Tso to the Spring and Autumn Annals*, the three great ambitions of a scholar should be to exemplify virtuous conduct (*li-te*), to accomplish great deeds (*li-kung*), and to leave behind a legacy in spoken or written words (*li-yen*).[68] Thus, a moral life was in the end deemed more important than worldly accomplishment. For everything there is an appropriate season, and when circumstances were not favorable for the scholar of high moral principle to serve, as Li and his friends discovered in the difficult years of the late Northern Sung, it was the wise scholar who retreated from the world of politics, instead concentrating his efforts on the arts.

Born to a distinguished family of scholar-officials and collectors in Shu-ch'eng in southern Anhwei, Li Kung-lin achieved his *chin-shih* degree in 1070 but, instead of entering immediately into official service, chose to live in seclusion for nearly ten years in his native Lung-mien (Sleeping Dragon) Mountains. In the 1070s, the Northern Sung government was embroiled in disputes generated by a court-initiated reform movement. It was not until early 1079 that Li returned to the capital, Pien-ching, to work as a reader of examination

Pl. 8d. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 15, "Remonstration"

papers. And from 1083 to 1085, he served in several provincial posts in Kiangsi and Honan. Following the death of the emperor Shen-tsung in April 1085, under the regency of the dowager empress Kao, anti-reform conservatives returned to power. The capital, alive with cultural activity, drew together under Su Shih, a leading conservative, such literary and artistic luminaries as Huang T'ing-chien, Mi Fu, Wang Shen, and Chao Ling-jang. By then, Li Kung-lin was back in the capital working in the Secretariat Chancellery. In 1088, Su Shih was appointed the chief examiner of the *chin-shih* degree and Li was again made an examination grader. He remained in the capital until 1097, when he left to serve as a minor district officer in Anhwei, and retired in 1100. He died at Lung-mien in 1106.

It is clear that Li Kung-lin, who ended his days in government service near the bottom of the bureaucratic ladder, did not enjoy a particularly successful official career.[69] As is pointed out in his biography, in the early twelfth-century *Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era* (preface dated 1120), "Because he remained in low-level officialdom, without achieving distinction, he became known only for his painting."[70] It is significant that Li, the scholar-official, retreated from official life after he earned his *chin-shih* degree, returning only as an "amateur"—meaning nonprofessional—painter. "Though he followed an official's career for thirty years," his biographer comments, "he never for one moment forgot the mountains and the forests."[71]

The archetypal scholar-official painter, Li Kung-lin displayed characteristics that would later become cultural conventions. He refused to paint either for profit or for the rich and powerful, and he lamented that while he painted "only to express [his] nature and feeling . . . the world could not understand, and insisted that [he] offer people entertainment!"[72]

With Li Kung-lin begins an era in which the political and social climate nurtured a new, unprecedented kind of art. Throughout the T'ang dynasty, painters were hired artisans serving to document official life. At the end of the T'ang, reclusive scholars, turning to landscape painting, developed an "educated" approach to that subject. By the middle of the eleventh century, however, monumental landscape painting as practiced by professional court painters had also become a popular official idiom. Then, in the late Northern Sung, alongside the artisan painters, there arose a new class of amateur scholar-official artists. Since they were not employed as painters and were thus unencumbered by patronage, they perceived painting not as a means of narrative or for creating heroic compositions but as an expression of inner vision and emotion hitherto reserved only for poetry. The eighth-century scholar-artist Wang Wei (699?–761?), because he had "[combined] poetry in painting and painting in poetry," was, according to Su Shih, the ideal painter.[73] The eleventh-century scholar Shen Kua praised Wang Wei for his marvelous use of invented imagery. "In painting flowers, [Wang Wei] mixed peach and apricot blossoms, hibiscus and lotus, and flowers [of different seasons] in the same scene. . . . When something came to mind, the hand responded intuitively; when ideas

Pl. 8e, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 17, "Serving His Sovereign"



connected, painting instantly took shape."[74] To achieve full affective power, it was thought, a poet or painter should free himself from both subject and logic. Wang Wei even painted a snow scene with a banana tree in it, because the presence of that tree was true to what he was trying to say.

The difference between amateur scholar-official painting and artisan, or professional, court painting is underscored by the attack waged by late Northern Sung scholar-critics on realism, a style commonly followed by artisan painters and looked down upon as something akin to Western kitsch or popular illustration. Su Shih, for instance, declared that "anyone who judges painting by form-likeness shows merely the insight of a child."[75] Scholar-official painting was thus infused with life not so much by the representation of reality as by evocation and reflection and the elicitation of associations that lie within the realm of feeling.

Li Kung-lin drew on many sources of archaic painting and calligraphy, simplifying the imagery he had inherited and turning the narrative style into an iconic one. By nature an illustrator, Li was the first major late Northern Sung master to turn back from landscape painting to figural representation.[76] But instead of following the official didactic manner, he sought to attain personal transcendence with an intimate drawing style. His radical simplification of painting to plain drawing manifests a purist vision that is in part Confucian and intellectual and in part Taoist and mystical. Plain drawing is not drawing at all in the Western sense of the word, since it does not build form with multiple modeling strokes. Rather, it is monochromatic ink painting with a single



Fig. 19. *Scenes from the Life of the Buddha: Dipamkara's Prediction*, T'ang dynasty, 9th century. Detail, "Old Age." Banner from Tunhuang, Kansu Province, ink and color on silk, 23⅝ x 6½ in. (60 x 16.5 cm). British Museum, London

brushline, a modulated ink outline that captures and reveals the essence of an object spontaneously and completely, without correction. By eliminating both color and modeling and communicating directly through line, the painter imparts a sense of physical movement and effort, through which the viewer is invited both to experience and to merge with the image and with the painter.

Compared with a realistic figural representation of the late T'ang (fig. 10), which is an extension of the painter's visual world, Li's figural drawing, devoid of color and illusionism, is linear, calligraphic, and intellectual. During the ninth and tenth centuries, figural representation reached its flowering in opulence and naturalism. In a ninth-century Buddhist banner from Tun-huang, *Dipamkara's Prediction* (fig. 19), brightly painted figures of the Buddha and two bodhisattvas stand before a bowing novice against a well-defined landscape setting. The carefully wrought sculptural images of the deities are theatrically presented; their demeanors, though benevolent, are impersonal and masklike. The brushwork is even and continuous, subordinated to a naturalistic representation of the subject. By contrast, Li Kung-lin, in his illustration of "The Fundamental Way" (pl. 8a), rejects realistic representation and eliminates superfluous description. Human surroundings, when included for reasons of context, are graphically alluded to rather than naturalistically rendered. Thus the rock and bamboo signify a scholar's garden and the garden wall is drawn freehand, without architectural precision. The area of the ground on which the figures stand is otherwise left blank. The figures, organized and defined by the spaces around them, seem to live in a cerebral rather than a physical world. Isolated, austere, and restrained, they project the very essence of reality because of their intense psychological absorption.

Li's facility in his handling of brush and ink was such that he could translate his vision onto silk or paper with total control and ease. He avoided symmetry and made scant use of mechanical aids, such as a ruler or compass, even when he depicted architecture or furniture, lest his drawing appear lifeless. One can well concur with Su Shih's dictum that "anyone who judges painting by form-likeness shows merely the insight of a child," for it is the visible traces of the painter's awe and his empathy with nature as captured by his brush that make the painting memorable and inimitable.

According to his biographer, he "places the idea [*i*, or 'intent'] of a painting above all other considerations, and makes composition and decoration subordinate to it."[77] It was Wang Ch'ang-lin, the eighth-century poet seen in *Scholars of the Liu-li Hall* (pl. 6), who first suggested that there were three stages of poetic imagination: the "physical state" (*wu-ching*), the "affective state" (*ch'ing-ching*), and the "idea state" (*i-ching*).[78] Li's painting of the "idea," or mental, image parallels the lyric tradition in Chinese poetry, in which the operative phrase is "poetry speaks intent" (*shih-yen-chih*).[79] This explicit emphasis on "idea" or "intent" calls for an interpretation based on the painter's intention and state of mind.[80]

A consummate draftsman, Li was able "to distinguish the expressions of a face. . . . Through dots and lines, each figure, whether exalted or humble, rich



Fig. 20. *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail, "Roadside Encounter," from Chapter 7, "Three Cardinal Resources: Heaven, Earth, and Man"

or poor, is distinctive."[81] For Li's powers of characterization, we may examine his painting of a roadside encounter (fig. 20). Stepping to the side of a road, a gentleman, turned sideways and bending slightly forward while shuffling backward, invites another gentleman to pass. The second gentleman, bowing courteously and with his hands cupped together in gratitude, tiptoes by in short, quick steps. This graceful social ballet, a familiar sight in early Chinese society, vividly captures the ritual courtesy that embodies the spirit of *jang,* or yielding, which denotes not only politeness but a deeply inculcated value for mutual accommodation. The image of one man yielding to another encapsulates the meaning of the phrase "ritual propriety means simple reverence,"[82] which explains why piety for Li Kung-lin represented the fountainhead of a polite and harmonious society.

Refraining from superficial brilliance, Li preferred understatement. "The common artisan is sometimes able to imitate [Li's] finely finished works," noted Li's biographer, "but when it comes to [those passages that are] sketchy and simplified, they can never come close."[83] Li achieved this simplicity by reinventing figure painting through calligraphic formulas. He did not paint directly from life. Instead, borrowing from ancient calligraphy, he reduced early drawing techniques to brush formulas for "making before matching [reality]."[84] "He began painting by studying Ku K'ai-chih [ca. 344–ca. 406], . . . Wu Tao-tzu [active ca. 710–60], and other early masters. . . . Although he never pla-

giarized their work, he subtly modeled his own on their principles."[85] He painted every kind of subject—Buddhist, Taoist, mythological, historical, illustrations of famous classics, portraits, animals, and landscape—and, copying many ancient styles, transformed them through his own idiom. "After filling his mind with [ancient styles], he gathered up the best of them and made them his own . . . creating a unique style."[86]

Barnhart has noted that Li, above all other painters, revived Ku K'ai-chih's archaic "gossamer line" (*kao-ku yu-ssu*) style.[87] Li's fascination with Ku is evident in the large number of pictures he painted with Six Dynasties subjects. In the *Classic of Filial Piety,* he returned to Ku's archaic linear style of narrative illustration in a handscroll format (fig. 21), which marked a conscious break with the heroic mid-T'ang wall-painting style of Wu Tao-tzu, the bold, thickening-and-thinning brush style that dominated artisan figure painting of the early Northern Sung.

Li used two basic drapery techniques, one square and one round, which, during the late Northern Sung, were commonly associated, respectively, with

Fig. 21. After Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344–ca. 406). *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies,* 6th–7th century. Detail, "The Emperor Admonishes a Court Lady." Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 9 11/16 x 137 7/16 in. (24.9 x 348.1 cm). British Museum, London







the styles of a Six Dynasties painter, Ts'ao Chung-ta (active ca. 550–77), and the T'ang master Wu Tao-tzu. According to Kuo Jo-hsü, the eleventh-century author of *Experiences in Painting*,

> The two styles of Ts'ao [Chung-ta] and Wu [Tao-tzu] are followed by all students. . . . Wu's brushwork is round and turns in circles, with drapery ends flying and lifted, while Ts'ao's brushwork shows a closely pleated style, with draperies hanging tightly. This is why it is said by students, "Wu's drapery blows in the wind, while Ts'ao's clothing clings as if coming out of the water."[18]

In Li's *Five Tribute Horses*, datable to 1090, the groom (fig. 22) is draped in robes depicted in an attenuated angular drapery pattern known as the "iron-wire" (*t'ieh-hsien*) style. The robe is fresh and well pressed, the sleeves and skirt defined by stylishly crisp, sharp folds. In the illustration for the "Remon-

Fig. 22. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *Five Tribute Horses*, datable to 1090. Detail, "The Fifth Groom." Handscroll, ink on paper. Present location unknown, formerly in Kikuchi and Yamamoto Teijiro Collections, Japan

Fig. 23. *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail from Chapter 15, "Remonstration" (pl. 8d)



Fig. 24. *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail from Chapter 15, "Remonstration" (pl. 8d)

stration" scene of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (pl. 8d), the angular drapery mode is used together with the more dynamic swirling drapery style commonly associated with Wu Tao-tzu. The secondary figures at right (fig. 23) are shown in the angular, pleated drapery folds of the Ts'ao mode, the two protagonists at center, the seated sovereign (fig. 24) and his bowing servitor, are depicted with the round, fluttering, thickening-and-thinning drapery of the Wu mode, while the billowing draperies of the opponents in this passionate confrontation effectively create a vortex of emotional energy that forcefully communicates the spirit of the critical impasse, an impasse that carries profound dynastic as well as personal implications.

It is no exaggeration to say that after Li, few Chinese figure painters could pick up a brush or draw a line without first thinking of him. So great was the felt presence of Li Kung-lin that later Chinese figure painters became progressively less able to create new styles by relying on their own inspiration.

1. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties; completed 847), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 1; see William R. B. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* [vol. 1] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 61.
2. According to Wolfram Eberhard, in *Social Mobility in Traditional China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), p. 6:

    The rationalization behind this sequence was that the gentry as officials are leaders of society and direct the moral education of the people. The farmers have to be led, but they produce. The craftsmen produce, but unnecessary things, thus inducing the farmers to indulge in luxuries instead of saving. The merchants are persons who transport unnecessary things from place to place, making money without producing anything. Moreover, they induce even more people to luxury than the craftsmen.

3. For a discussion of the monoscenic and the continuous methods, see Kurt Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 12–33.
4. See E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Washington, D.C., and New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 116.
5. See Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, translated by John Fothergill (London: Duckworth, 1907).
6. First published in *The Chinese Exhibition: An Illustrated Handlist of the Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1974), cover ill.
7. For a discussion of this painting in connection with the ancient Chinese concept of magical "response" (*kan*), see Shih Shou-chien, "A New Interpretation of Tu Fu's Poem 'On Painting' and of the Decline of the 'Kan-shen t'ung-ling' Concept in the History of Chinese Painting" (in Chinese), *I-shu hsüeh*, no. 4 (1990), pp. 165–92.
8. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 9, pp. 115–16.
9. Ibid.
10. See Chu Chu-yü and Li Shih-sun, comps., *T'ang-Sung hua-chia jen-ming tz'u-tien* (Dictionary of T'ang and Sung Painters) (Shanghai: Chung-kuo Ku-tien I-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1958), p. 376; on Han Kan and Wang Wei, see Tuan Ch'eng-shih, *Ssu-t'a-chi* (Record of Temples and Pagodas; preface dated 843) (Beijing: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1964), p. 12.
11. See Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 118.
12. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 15.
13. Ibid.
14. Tu Fu, *Tu Kung-pu shih-chi* (The Poems of Tu Fu) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1972), vol. 1, p. 201; after translation in David Hawkes, ed. and trans., *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 133–44.
15. See biography of Ku K'ai-chih, in Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 5, p. 71.
16. See Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, pp. xxiiiff. and 4. For a discussion of the various readings of the six principles, see Wen C. Fong, "On Hsieh Ho's 'Liu-fa,'" *Oriental Art*, n.s. 9, no. 4 (Winter 1963), pp. 242–45.
17. Chu Ching-hsüan, *T'ang-ch'ao ming-hua lu* (Record of Famous Painters of the T'ang Dynasty; ca. 840), in Yü Chün-chih, ed., *Mei-shu ts'ung-kan* (Collected Reprints on Fine Arts) (Taipei: Chung-hua Ts'ung-shu Wei-yüan-hui, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 26–27.
18. Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 15.
19. Su Shih, "Shu Wu Tao-tzu hua-hou" (Writing on a Painting by Wu Tao-tzu), in *Tung-p'o t'i-pa* (Colophons by Su Shih), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (Collected Works on Chinese Art) (Taipei: Shih-chieh Shu-chü, 1962), vol. 22, *chüan* 5, p. 95.
20. For a discussion of these three categories of narrative representation, see John Hay, "'Along the River During Winter's First Snow': A Tenth-Century Handscroll and Early Chinese Narrative," *Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 830 (May 1972), p. 298.
21. For arguments dating this painting to the tenth century, see Ellen J. Laing, "Notes on *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*," *Orientations* 21, no. 2 (February 1990), pp. 32–39.
22. See Tung Yu, *Kuang-ch'üan hua-pa* (Colophons Written at Kuang-ch'üan), as quoted in Chu Chu-yü and Li Shih-sun, *T'ang-Sung hua-chia jen-ming tz'u-tien*, p. 137.
23. The horse trappings in this painting are the topic of a study by Yang Hung, "Sung-tai ti ma-ko chih-chih" (Horse Trappings of the Sung Period), *Wen-wu*, no. 9 (1987), pp. 69–75.
24. See Li Lin-ts'an, "A Study of the Masterpiece 'T'ang Ming-huang's Journey to Shu,'" *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961), pp. 315–21.
25. Ibid., p. 321.
26. After translation by Witter Bynner in Cyril Birch, comp. and ed., *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1, *From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 266–69.
27. For representations of ritual processions of the Venetian Renaissance, an interesting com-

parison with Chinese depictions, see Patricia F. Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

28. See Chang Tzu-ning (Joseph Chang), "Pei-Sung Huang Tsung-tao 'She-lu t'u,'" (*Stag Hunt* by the Northern Sung [Painter] Huang Tsung-tao), *Mei-shu yen-chiu*, no. 1 (1988), pp. 71–72; see also Wu Ch'i-chen, *Shu-hua chi* (Records of Calligraphy and Painting; ca. 1677) (reprint, Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), *chüan* 6, pp. 619–20. For Huang Tsung-tao's biography, see Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien* (Precious Mirror of Painting; preface dated 1365), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 3, p. 87.
29. See, for example, Giacomo Balla, *Running Dog*, in the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
30. For a general view of the culture and society of the Sung period, see James T. C. Liu and Peter J. Golas, eds., *Change in Sung China: Innovation or Renovation?* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1969).
31. See Yashiro Yukio, "Sōmo Shū Bunku kyūchū-zu" (A Sung Copy of the Scroll *In the Palace* by Chou Wen-chü), *Bijutsu kenkyū* 25 (January 1934), pp. 1–12; and *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art*, exhib. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), under no. 16, *Ladies of the Court*, pp. 27–29.

    The museums in which the four sections are now preserved are: I Tatti, Florence; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The composition, comprising eighty figures, proceeds from right to left in twelve episodes:

    I. I Tatti, Florence (16 figures):
    1. A formally attired court painter (Chou Wen-chü himself) paints the portrait of a seated imperial consort with an elaborate coiffure.
    2. One lady and two maidservants catch butterflies.
    3. Ladies-in-waiting and a maidservant attend to the morning toilet of a seated imperial consort and her young daughter.

    II. The Cleveland Museum of Art (22 figures):
    4. Seated ladies listen to women musicians playing *p'i-pa* (balloon-guitars) and zithers.
    5. With ladies-in-waiting in attendance, two maidservants carry, in a palanquin, a young princess holding a parrot to join the concert in the preceding scene.
    6. Women watch a child learning to walk, while a standing woman, with a maidservant in attendance, fixes a flower in her hair.
    7. Woman and children play with two dogs.

    III. The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass. (23 figures):
    7. (cont.) Woman with three children and five dogs.
    8. A second group of musicians performs on pipe instruments and a harp, while two seated ladies listen and two women and a child stand by.
    9. Women engaged in their toilet.

    IV. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (19 figures):
    10. Ladies-in-waiting and maidservants attend to the morning toilet of an imperial consort seated on a platform bed.
    11. A lady-in-waiting combs a young girl's hair, while the girl's mother stands by and a maidservant holds a plate of water behind her.
    12. The youthful Southern T'ang ruler Li Yü, in the company of ladies and ladies-in-waiting, views a hanging scroll.

    The Metropolitan Museum of Art also owns a Japanese copy (Kano school, eighteenth century?; 42.61) in outline sketch with color notes, mounted as an album, of the entire composition by Chou Wen-chü.
32. Chang Ch'eng's colophon is now mounted with the Cleveland section of the scroll. See *Eight Dynasties*, pp. 27–28.
33. After translation in Kang-i Sun Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese Tz'u Poetry: From Late T'ang to Northern Sung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 71.
34. For the rise of the new lyric aesthetic, see Yu-kung Kao, "Chinese Lyric Aesthetics," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 47–90.
35. See Xu Bangda [Hsü Pang-ta], *Ku-shu-hua wei-o k'ao-pien* (Studies on Forgeries and Mistakes in Ancient Calligraphy and Painting) (Chiang-su: Chiang-su Ku-chi Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 148–54. A painting of the same title, *Scholars of the Liu-li Hall*, by Chou Wen-chü was recorded in the catalogue of Emperor Hui-tsung's collection, *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era; preface dated 1120). There is a shorter composition, *The Literary Garden*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing. Traditionally attributed to the eighth-century painter Han Huang (723–787), it has recently been established as a cut-down version of the original composition by Chou. The thirteenth-century copy

at the Metropolitan faithfully reproduces the tenth-century original in details and full color, including drapery lines in Chou's famous "tremulous brushline" (*chan-pi*), except that the fluttering lines have become complex and mannered in a way typical of late Southern Sung Academy figure paintings.

36. See Chin Wei-no, "Ts'ung Hua-sheng-tun tao Niu-yüeh: Ou-Mei fang-wen san-chi chih-san" (From Washington to New York: Journey Through Europe and America, III), *Mei-shu yen-chiu*, no. 2 (1982), p. 77.
37. See Li Ko-fei (d. 1106), *Lo-yang ming-yuan chi* (Record of Famous Gardens of Lo-yang) (reprint of a Ming ed.; Beijing: Wen-hsüeh Ku-chih K'an-hsing-she, 1955).
38. For a study of the historical background of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, see Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).
39. The qualifying examination (*chieh-shih*), given in every prefectural city, was followed by a municipal examination (*sheng-shih*) at the capital. Those who passed the examination, the so-called presented scholars, then faced the palace examination (*tien-shih*), presided over by the emperor himself. Candidates were tested on their knowledge of the Confucian classics and literary style, with special emphasis on their ability to apply classical precepts and historical precedents to contemporary issues and problems.
40. See E. A. Kracke, Jr., "Sung K'ai-feng: Pragmatic Metropolis and Formalistic Capital," in John Winthrop Haeger, ed., *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), pp. 49–77.
41. See E. A. Kracke, Jr., "Sung Society: Change Within Tradition," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (August 1955), pp. 479–88.
42. See Li Lin-ts'an, "The Five Old Men of Sui-yang," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 8, no. 5 (November–December 1973), pp. 1–21; Thomas Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, II: Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), pp. 164–70; and Peter Sturman in Mary Gardner Neill, *The Communion of Scholars: Chinese Art at Yale*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1982), pp. 97–100.

    The five portraits are now dispersed among three museums in the United States: Tu Yen and Chu Kuan are at the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Wang Huan and Feng P'ing are at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and Pi Shih-ch'ang is at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
43. See Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 2; see also Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, pp. 72–73.
44. See Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 156–67.
45. See essay by Wang I, "Hsieh-hsiang pi-chüeh" (Secrets for Painting Portraits), in *P'ei-wen-chai shu hua p'u* (Encyclopedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the P'ei-wen Studio; 1708) (reprint, Taipei: Hsin-hsing Shu-chü Yu-hsien Kung-ssu, 1972), *chüan* 14, pp. 25–26.
46. At least two of the five men had experienced high risks in their careers. Chu Kuan, a participant in the battle and peace treaty of Shan-yüan in 1004 under Grand Councillor K'ou Chun, had narrowly escaped punishment when K'ou, the late Duke of Lai, was cashiered and later died in exile; and Tu Yen was Grand Councillor in 1044 for barely ninety days before he was dismissed.
47. See Chu Ts'un-li, ed., *T'ieh-wang shan-hu* (Coral Treasures in an Iron Net), in *I-shu shang-chien hsüan-chen* (A Selective Collection of Books on the Appreciation of the Arts) (Taipei: National Central Library Reprints, 1970), vol. 3, p. 1024.
48. Ibid., p. 1032.
49. For a summary of recent opinions on the surviving works of Li Kung-lin, see Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art*, p. 10.
50. See Richard M. Barnhart, "Li Kung-lin's *Hsiao Ching t'u*, Illustrations of the *Classic of Filial Piety*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1967); for Li Kung-lin's calligraphy, see Hui-liang Chu, "The Chung Yu Tradition (A.D. 151–230): A Pivotal Development in Sung Calligraphy" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1990).
51. After translation in James Legge, trans., *The Hsiâo King (Hsiao-ching)*, in *Sacred Books of China*, 2d ed., part 1, Sacred Books of the East, 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), pp. 465–66.
52. These include paintings attributed to Ma Ho-chih (died ca. 1170) and Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322) and an illustrated wood-block edition of the classic dated 1308; see Barnhart, "*Hsiao Ching t'u*," pp. 66–70.
53. Only fifteen sections of Li Kung-lin's scroll remain; illustrations for 1, 2, and 6 are missing. For some reason (Barnhart believes it derives from an earlier tradition, which Li followed), the illustrations for 11 and 14 are transposed; see ibid., pp. 107–12.
54. From the classic *The Great Learning*; see James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (1893–95; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 358–59.
55. After translation in Legge, *Hsiâo King*, in *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, pp. 481–82.
56. See Barnhart, "*Hsiao Ching t'u*," p. 116.
57. After translation in Legge, *Hsiâo King*, in *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, pp. 476–77.
58. See Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

59. Ibid., p. 208.
60. For a discussion of the Ming-t'ang through the T'ang period, see ibid., pp. 195–211 (includes bibliography).
61. See James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "Feng-shan wen-hua yü Sung-tai Ming-t'ang chi-t'ien" (Feng-shan Culture and the Worship of Heaven in the Ming-t'ang During the Sung Period), in *Liang-Sung-shih yen-chiu hui-pien* (Collection of Studies in Sung History) (Taipei: Lien Ching Ch'u-pan-shih-yeh Kung-ssu, 1987), pp. 3–9. Still later, in 1098, a new Ming-t'ang-like structure was erected at the open-air Altar of Heaven so that the ritual of the worship of Heaven was finally absorbed by imperial ancestor worship.
62. After translation in Legge, *Hsiâo King*, in *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, pp. 484–85.
63. It is interesting to note that in Southern Sung and Yüan illustrations of the *Classic of Filial Piety* derived from Li's, both chapters 9 and 16 show the imperial temple structure. See Barnhart, "*Hsiao Ching t'u*," figs. 64, 71, 80, 86.
64. After translation in Legge, *Hsiâo King*, in *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, pp. 483–84.
65. Wang Fu-chih, *Sung-lun* (Essays on the Sung Period) (Taipei: Li-jen Shu-chü, 1985), *chüan* 4, p. 86.
66. Ibid., p. 92.
67. After translation in Legge, *Hsiâo King*, in *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, p. 486.
68. *Commentary of Tso*; see James Legge, trans., *Spring and Autumn Annals with Tso-chuan Commentary (Ch'un-chiu yü tso-chuan)*, vol. 5 of *The Chinese Classics* (1893–95; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960).
69. Imperial service had nine grades, and Li's final post was grade 8b.
70. See Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Sung Liao Chin hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Sung, Liao, and Chin Dynasties) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), p. 453.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid. I have, with only slight modifications, followed the translation in Barnhart, "*Hsiao Ching t'u*," for this and following passages from Li's biography in *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 7, pp. 74–76.
73. See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 27 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 25.
74. Shen Kua, *Meng-ch'i pi-t'an* (Notes Written at Meng-ch'i), in *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* (Shanghai: Shang-wu Yin-shu-kuan, 1937), vol. 282, *chüan* 17, p. 107.
75. See Bush, *Chinese Literati on Painting*, p. 26.
76. Writing in the late eleventh century, Mi Fu commented, "People nowadays seldom make narrative paintings." See Mi Fu, *Hua-shih* (History of Painting), in Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1973), vol. 1, p. 458.
77. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, p. 452.
78. Professor Yu-kung Kao suggests the translation "inscape" for this last state, "when the poet's aesthetic ideas fill and spread out in the imaginary space of his mind." See Kao, "Chinese Lyric Aesthetics," in Murck and Fong, *Words and Images*, p. 74.
79. For the concept of *shih-yen-chih*, see James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 67–70.
80. See Introduction, note 4.
81. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, p. 452.
82. The *Classic of Filial Piety*, chap. 12; in Legge, *Sacred Books of China*, part 1, pp. 481–82.
83. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, p. 452.
84. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 118.
85. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, p. 452.
86. Ibid.
87. See Richard M. Barnhart, "Survivals, Revivals, and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Figure Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 18–24 June 1970* (Taipei, 1972), pp. 143–210.
88. See Kuo Jo-hsü, *T'u-hua chien-wen chih* (Experiences in Painting), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 10; and see Alexander C. Soper, trans., *Kuo Jo-hsü's Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wen chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), pp. 16–17.



2 *Of Nature and Art: Monumental Landscape*

Writing about landscape painting in the West, Kenneth Clark noted that "in times when the human spirit seems to have burned most brightly the painting of landscape for its own sake did not exist and was unthinkable."[1] This observation seems also to be borne out in the East. The development of Chinese landscape painting, "paintings of mountains and rivers" (*shan-shui-hua*), occurred during the Wei, Tsin, and Six Dynasties eras (220–589) and the Five Dynasties period (907–60), China's two long intervals of political disunity, when poets and artists, disenchanted with the world of human affairs, turned away to seek a realm of spiritual enlightenment.

In the West, the human spirit has always shone most brilliantly in the expression of the creative will and in the pursuit of individualism; in the East, the human will is subsumed under a larger principle, one that is expressed through a profound belief in communion with nature, a cosmic vision of man's harmonious existence in a vast but orderly universe. The unique expression of this vision is found in the monumental landscape painting of the early Northern Sung (960–1127), whose development coincided with that of Neo-Confucianism, the resurgence of the ancient moral philosophy, at a time of vigorous idealism among the most creative class in society, the newly risen scholar-officials.

Bounded by mountain ranges and traversed by two great rivers, the Yellow and the Yangtze, China's natural landscape has played an important role in the shaping of the Chinese mind and character. The sparsely inhabited mountains are both a reminder of a simpler past, of truth unquestioned and nature unspoiled, and a spiritual refuge, where moral values can be cultivated and harmony with nature restored. From very early times the Chinese, unlike Western Europeans, who considered untamed nature inimical to human society, imagined the mountains an earthly paradise, the abode of the immortals. Thus did the early fifth-century poet T'ao Ch'ien envision, in his famous fable of the Peach Blossom Spring, the blossom-covered mountain valley as an ancient utopia, free of warfare and social turmoil.[2] After the breakup of the Han Empire, during the fourth and fifth centuries, the influence of Taoism and Buddhism led artists to turn to nature in their desire to express themselves in a spiritual domain. Several centuries later, in the wake of the devastation of the T'ang capital, Ch'ang-an, by the An Lu-shan rebellion, the poet Tu Fu (712–770) sounded his immortal lament,

Attributed to Ch'ü Ting (active ca. 1023–ca. 1050). Detail from *Summer Mountains* (pl. 10)

The country is shattered,
But the mountains and the rivers remain![1]

Indeed, throughout Chinese history, in times of both war and peace, landscapes of "rivers and mountains" (*chiang-shan*) have nurtured and reinvigorated the Chinese spirit.

Landscape painting first developed as illustration for narratives and poetry. Paintings of trees and rocks became an independent genre during the late T'ang period, in the eighth and ninth centuries. During the tumultuous Five Dynasties era, in the early tenth century, recluse scholars fleeing to the mountains saw the tall pine tree as an image of the virtuous man in the wilderness. They began to paint a symbolic landscape, with the great pine at the center of a moral universe. Then, in the early Northern Sung dynasty, the mordant, bleak spirit of the recluse painter, first expressed in the gnarled pine trees, was transformed and projected by professional court painters into a heroic, epic landscape style. This early Northern Sung vision of eternity, a timeless, archetypal landscape, lasted about one hundred years, from the middle of the tenth through the middle of the eleventh century.

Narrative and Poetic Illustration

Landscape elements first appeared as settings for narrative and symbolic representation. Archaic Chinese representations of mountains and trees resembled their ideographic counterparts: *shan* ("mountain") 山 comprises three triangles, a "host" peak flanked by two "guests," and *mu* ("tree") 木 is described by forked branches and anchoring roots. The first important compositional device was that of overlapping triangles, which created the impression of diagonal spatial recession. In a late Han tile that shows hunters shooting geese at a lakeside (fig. 25), the lake, delineated by three such overlapping tri-

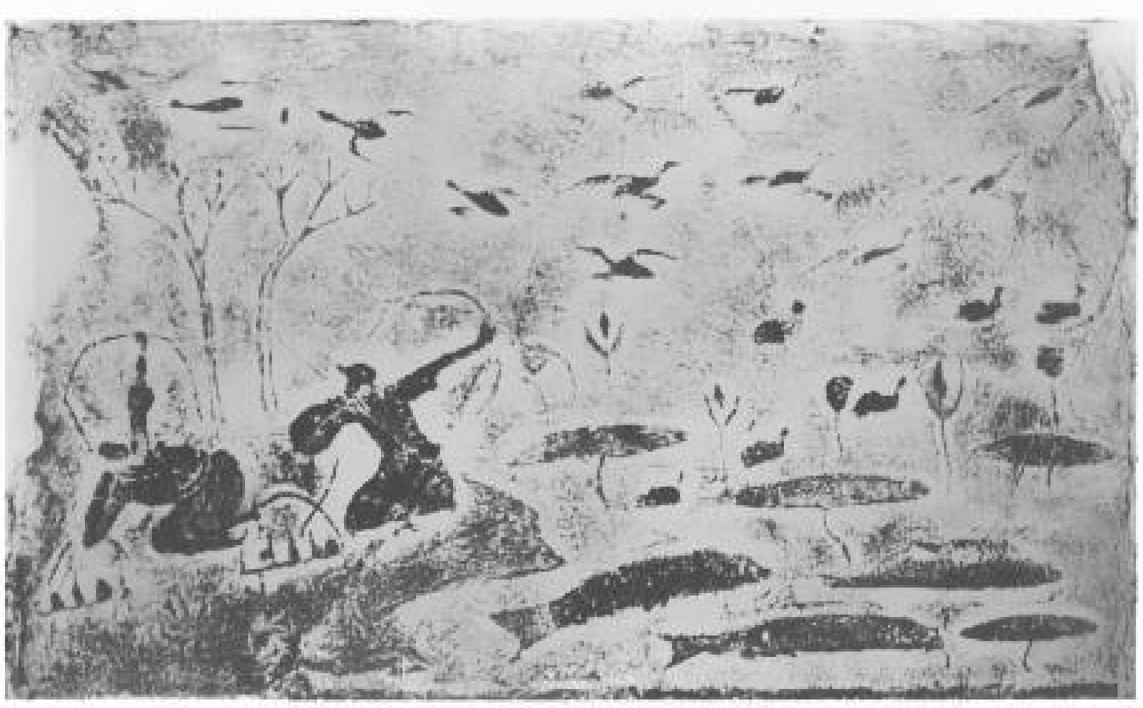


Fig. 25. ***Hunting and Harvesting Scenes***, Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220. Rubbing of a tomb tile from Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan Province, 15½ x 19 in. (39.5 x 48 cm). Ch'eng-tu Museum



Fig. 26. *Mahasattva Jataka*, Northern Chou dynasty, mid-6th century. Wall painting from Cave 428, Tun-huang, Kansu Province

angles, is filled with the silhouettes of lotus leaves and gliding fish, while the sky is lined with geese in flying formation. Rather than being grasped comprehensively, the picture unfolds sequentially: individual elements, each a discrete image, are read on an additive basis, one by one. Compositional unity is achieved through the consonance and repetition of similar forms and rhythms. By the mid-sixth century, as seen in the *Jataka* wall paintings at Tun-huang, Cave 428 (fig. 26), motifs of diagonally linked chains of overlapping mountains provide settings for individual scenes, creating "space cells."[4] Although each element is still read individually, successive scenes now unfold horizontally, as in a handscroll, with tall trees serving as both space fillers and space dividers.

During the T'ang dynasty, narrative illustrations of city scenes and scholars' gardens developed as part illuminated map and part genre painting.[5] Two important T'ang landscape compositions are paintings of gardens, the *Wang-ch'uan Villa* (fig. 27), after Wang Wei (699?–761?), and the *Ten Views from a Thatched Lodge* (fig. 28), after Lu Hung (active ca. 713–42), both pictures of a scholar's retreat.[6] In transforming natural settings into artfully landscaped human environments, it was customary for property owners to name sites thematically—"Arbor Beside the Lake," for example, or "Bamboo Studio"—and to write poems about them. As pictorial representations, the paintings illustrate the poetic themes of the sites rather than the actual landscapes. The scholar-poet, musician, and painter Wang Wei acquired his property on the banks of the Wang River, in the southwestern outskirts of the T'ang capital, Ch'ang-an, in about the year 740. Wang developed the property and composed a set of twenty quatrains describing its various points of interest.[7] Although the wall painting that illustrated the poems, which originally decorated the walls of a Buddhist temple, was destroyed (presumably during the Buddhist

persecutions of 845), the composition, known since the Northern Sung, has been preserved through the rubbing of a stone engraving cut in 1617.[8] The scenes are here organized in a series of space cells formed by circular mountain motifs similar to those seen in the *Jataka* wall paintings at Tun-huang.

The recluse scholar Lu Hung, who declined a court appointment, built his retreat, the Thatched Lodge, on Mount Sung outside the eastern capital, Lo-yang. The surviving version of Lu Hung's *Ten Views of a Thatched Lodge*, known since the thirteenth century, presents individual scenes that alternate with descriptive prefaces and poems.[9] Working within a rectangular format, the painter forms different compositional patterns by manipulating the placement of the trees and rocks: a hill encircled by a valley, a grotto surrounded by hills, a cottage surrounded by trees and rocks, a canopy of trees on flat ground or rising against a mountain slope, and so forth.

In neither Wang Wei's nor Lu Hung's composition does landscape as narrative or poetic illustration represent the "landscape of truth" as later conceived by the early Northern Sung painters. During the late Northern Sung and Southern Sung, however, when painters revived the illustration of poetry, they would return to the compositional patterns of Wang Wei and Lu Hung as their models.

Neo-Confucianism and Landscape Painting

It was Buddhism that first introduced, from India, a system of metaphysics and a coherent worldview more advanced than anything hitherto known in China. With Buddhist thought, scholars of the Six Dynasties period engaged in philosophical discussions of truth and reality, being and nonbeing, substantiality and nonsubstantiality.[10] Beginning in the late T'ang and early Northern

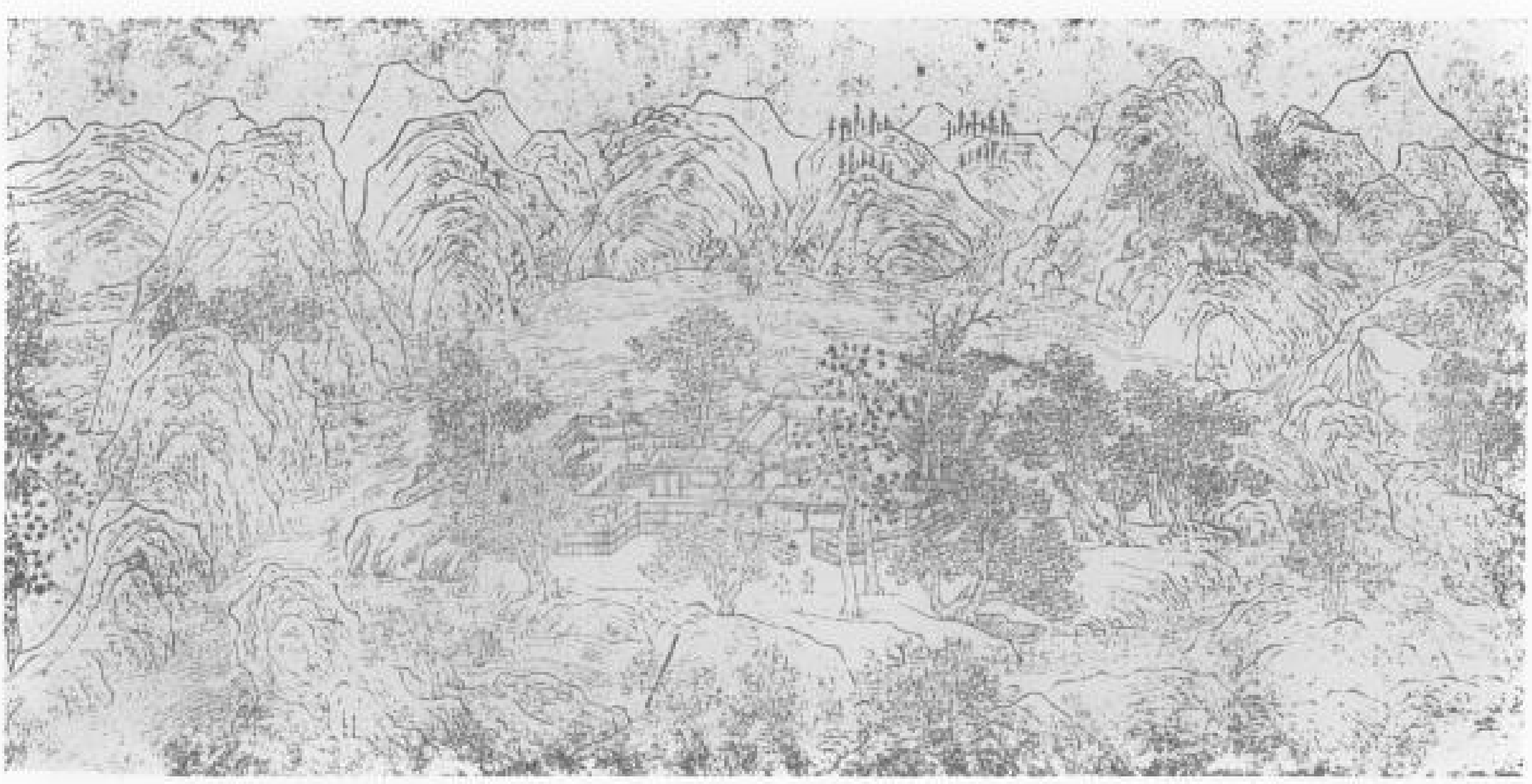


Fig. 27. After Wang Wei (699?–761?). *Wang-ch'uan Villa*. Rubbing from a stone engraving dated 1617, 11¾ x 192 in. (30 x 487.5 cm). Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University



Fig. 28. After Lu Hung (active ca. 713–42). *Ten Views from a Thatched Lodge.* Detail from Scene 1, "Thatched Lodge." Handscroll in ten sections, ink on paper, 11⅝ x 236⅝ in. (29.4 x 600 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Sung, Neo-Confucian thinkers rebuilt Confucian ethics on Buddhist and Taoist metaphysics. A principal tenet of Neo-Confucian philosophy holds that the universe has a basis in morality. Because Neo-Confucian moral philosophy defines the human mind as engaged with the nature of being, the traditional focus of learning was self-cultivation. To the extent that the "mind" (*hsin*) reflects the perfect "principles" (*li*) of nature, man can achieve union with the ultimate "principles" of cosmic creativity only by realizing the innate moral mind within the self.

The late T'ang Neo-Confucian scholar Li Ao (died ca. 840), borrowing a phrase from the Confucian classic *The Great Learning*, described his approach to learning and self-cultivation as *ko-wu chih-chih*, "the investigation of things leading to the perfection of knowledge." The phrase, however, does not imply modern scientific method. Shao Yung (1011–1077), a leading eleventh-century thinker, defined objective learning as "observing things in terms of things" (*i-wu kuan-wu*). Shao proposed that things should be observed "with the mind" and "in light of their own principles," rather than with the eye, since only the mind can perceive underlying principles. Man's observation of the world should therefore reflect the principles of nature and remain unclouded by egocentric human emotion (*ch'ing*).[11]

The unity of man and heaven (*t'ien-jen ho-i*), man as the co-creator rather than as merely a creature of the universe, is a key Neo-Confucian concept. In the words of the eleventh-century philosopher Chang Tsai,

> By expanding one's mind, one is able to embody the things of the whole world. If things are not embodied, it is because the mind has excluded them. . . . As [the sage] views the world, there is in it no one thing that is not his own self.[12]

It is through embodied (*t'i*) thinking and reflection and the dynamic interchange between the observer and the thing observed that man is able to grasp the workings of the universe.

Paintings of trees and rocks as embodiments of nature's principles first appeared as an independent genre in T'ang painting. Rocks, as "kernels of energy" and "bones of the earth," isolated and immovable, symbolize potency, while trees, which are born of seeds but grow into gnarled, dragonlike forms, symbolize enduring life.[13] The T'ang master Chang Ts'ao (active ca. 766–78) painted rocks and trees with unusually expressive brushwork, "using a blunt-tipped brush and sometimes rubbing with his fingers on the surface of the silk."[14] The description of Chang's painting technique recalls that of the inspired "untrammeled class" (*i-p'in*) of painters, who are reputed to have practiced the somewhat unorthodox working method of flinging ink onto silk and spreading it on the surface by means of their hair or hands.[15] In such a painting, it was not so much the composition of the work that was deemed important as the feeling of spontaneity and mystic oneness with nature. Chang described his own painting as

> A reaching outward to imitate Creation,
> And a turning inward to master the mind.[16]

This description can be said to sum up the philosophical approach of the Chinese landscape painter. Looking to nature he carefully studied the world around him, and looking to himself he sought his own response to nature. The interactive relationship between the two, as expressed by the term *wai-chung*, "outer/inner" or "exterior/interior," is circular and dynamic; as the artist sought to describe the external truth of the universe, he discovered at the same time an internal psychological truth.

After the fall of the T'ang, in the early tenth century, many scholars retreated to the mountains. Living in secluded hermitages or Buddhist temples, they attended to their spiritual needs, studying, painting, and thinking about nature and the universe. These scholars would become China's first great landscape masters. Ching Hao (ca. 870–ca. 930), a Neo-Confucian scholar who went to live in Mount T'ai-hang, in central Hopei Province, was the first to formulate a coherent theory of Chinese landscape painting. In his essay "Notes on Brush Method," Ching makes a clear distinction between physical likeness (*ssu*) and truth (*chen*):

> [A picture that attains] likeness achieves the physical form but leaves out the life breath of the subject, while in [a picture that attains] truth the life breath and inner qualities of the subject are fully present.[17]

For Ching, the painter of truth is a "sage" capable of "divining the emblems of objects and grasping their essence" (*tu-wu-hsiang erh ch'ü-ch'i-chen*).[18] The word "emblem," or *hsiang*, comes from the ancient divination classic the *Book of Changes*, a manual by which the future is predicted by the manipulation of sixty-four hexagrams (diagrams composed of six broken or unbroken lines).[19]

The hexagrams, as "emblems," are archetypes of physical forms (*hsing*).[20] By "divining emblems," Ching referred to the representation of true, or archetypal forms, rather than merely the physical qualities of objects.

In viewing landscape painting as a magical diagram of cosmic truth, Ching Hao nevertheless followed a rational approach of "investigation . . . leading to the perfection of knowledge":

> One must understand the archetype, the emblem of each thing. When a tree grows, it follows its own received nature. . . . The pine tree, [for example,] from its beginnings, may bend as it grows, but will never appear crooked. Sometimes it is dense with foliage, sometimes sparse, neither blue nor green. As a sapling it stands upright, its budding heart already harboring noble ambitions. Once it has grown taller than all the other trees, even when its lower branches bow down to the earth, they never touch the common ground. Its layered branches spreading in the forest, it has the air of a dignified and virtuous gentleman.[21]

"The emblems of the mountains and the rivers," continues Ching, "are mutually generative, their breath forces causing each other to grow."[22] In landscape painting, Ching sees generating and regenerating forms and forces, endlessly transformed in the changing light and mists of the seasons. Through the painter's rigorous method of selection and elimination, these are re-combined and re-presented, each time in a complete and newly organized harmony. "Only when you are able to forget about the brush and ink will you achieve true landscape."[23]

By perceiving in the pine tree the human characteristics of a virtuous gentleman, the recluse scholar-painters believed they had discovered in nature the moral order that had been lost in the human world. The first of the early Northern Sung landscape masters, Li Ch'eng (919–967), who was born in Ch'ing-chou, Shantung Province, was a descendant of the T'ang imperial family. An aristocrat fallen on hard times, Li is said to have painted desolate scenes of wintry forests because "men of virtue are now found only in the wilderness."[24] Although no original work by Li has survived, we know that his influence was extensive. *Travelers in a Wintry Forest* (pl. 9) is a large early twelfth-century hanging scroll after a composition by Li that is mentioned by the eleventh-century scholar-artist Mi Fu in his *History of Painting*.[25]

As an illustration of the Confucian scholar's renunciation of worldly affairs, *Travelers in a Wintry Forest* recalls the episode in the life of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, when, in his Great Going Forth in search of enlightenment, he entered a deep forest. In the painting, the scholar on a donkey and his two servant companions on foot are shown huddling against the cold as they make their way through the pine forest along a snow-covered riverbank. In both their configuration and their social relationship to one another, the wanderers are echoed in the frozen forest, in which a giant pine tree, symbol of the virtuous gentleman, is surrounded by more "lowly" vegetation—small trees, shrubs, and bamboos.[26] The rhythmic forms of the trees and the



Overleaf
Pl. 9a. Detail, pl. 9

cloudlike snow-covered boulders reflect and re-create the bearing and gestures of the figures in their fluttering draperies. Not in accord with the term "landscape"—a painting "of mountains and rivers"—the true subject of Li's painting is the great pine. Drawn with the meticulous and caring detail of a great portrait, the tree symbolizes the Neo-Confucian concept of *chün-tzu*, the uncommon, exceptional gentleman (pl. 9a). The shape of the great pine is unusual and complex; its needles remain constant, enduring the harshest of winter's onslaught. Like a great man, the tree, in Ching Hao's words, "may bend [from suffering] as it grows, but will never appear crooked." In its youth, "its budding heart [harbors] noble ambitions." As it ages, it grows in stature, climbing higher than all other trees. Finally, it is individual and superior, for "even when its lower branches bow down to the earth, they never touch the common ground." Indeed, for the Neo-Confucianist, the recluse scholar was the true sovereign of the moral earth, as the great pine was the lord of the lofty mountains.

In the composition after Li Ch'eng, the beautifully wrought vegetation around the central pine ranges from early sprouting brush to lush trees in full maturity to a shattered old tree trunk, composing a microcosm of the natural cycle of growth and decay, while the great pine standing tall symbolizes constancy and eternal truth. Mi Fu compared the "drawn but elegant" face of the scholar (pl. 9b)—the painter's self-portrait—with that of the T'ang poet Meng Hao-jan (689–740), a victim of earlier political vicissitudes. This reference to past suffering injects a note of poignancy into the picture, though the artist's own unyielding will is reflected by the stoic silence of the wintry forest.

Although the highly realistic depiction of the tree and figure, as well as the way the silhouetted boulders and slopes are sequentially unified in space, dates the execution of *Travelers in a Wintry Forest* to the early twelfth century, the powerful conception of the composition relates the painting directly to Li Ch'eng, the "master of a hundred generations."[27] As a work of the mid-tenth century, Li's anthropomorphized landscape—in which close-up views document in detail the myriad activities of nature—mediates halfway between narrative illustration and monumental landscape representation. Despite the solemnity of its theme, the vibrancy and intelligence of the imagery and the enjoyment in the execution are so much in evidence that it is easy to see why later masters—most notably, Kuo Hsi (pl. 11), Lo Chih-ch'uan (pl. 92), Chao Meng-fu (pl. 101), and Ni Tsan (pl. 116)—continued to be inspired both by the conception and by the style of this remarkable work.

Pl. 9. After Li Ch'eng (919–967). *Travelers in a Wintry Forest*, early 12th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 63 5/8 x 39 3/8 in. (161.6 x 100 cm). Purchase, Fletcher Fund and Bequest of Dorothy Graham Bennett, 1972 (1972.121)

Monumental Landscape Painting

During the early Northern Sung dynasty, emperors, noblemen, and scholar-officials, as well as successful merchants, decorated the walls and screens of their palaces and homes with monumental landscape paintings. In 992, for example, the southern landscape master Chü-jan (active ca. 960–95)—an expatriate from the vanquished Southern T'ang court of Li Yü—was called to the







Pl. 9b. Detail, pl. 9

Northern Sung imperial palace, in Pien-ching, to decorate the Jade Hall in the Institute of Academicians of the Imperial Chancellery. And in 1023–31, a six-paneled landscape screen by Yen Su (died 1040) was placed in the center of the same hall.[28]

As architectural decoration, earlier monumental wall paintings had served a ritual function. The Institute of Academicians, under the T'ang, was originally decorated with magical symbols of the universe, the Ocean Surrounding the Dragon Mountain. In the early Northern Sung, the Jade Hall had been first decorated on the east, north, and west with a continuous wall painting of dragons in water, executed from 980 to 983 by another southern expatriate painter from Li Yü's court, Tung Yü (active ca. 960–90).[29] The replacement in 992 of the central portion of Tung Yü's composition at the north end of the Jade Hall with a landscape by Chü-jan was, therefore, an important departure, inaugurating the tradition of decorating ceremonial halls of state with monumental landscapes that depicted "the vastness and multiplicity of Creation itself."[30]

In the Liao mausoleum at Ch'ing-ling, in eastern Mongolia, dating to about 1030, wall paintings representing the four seasons (fig. 29) are found at the four cardinal points of the circular burial chamber: spring to the

east, summer to the south, autumn to the west, and winter to the north. Two lines of geese, flying counterclockwise, are seen departing for the south in the autumn and returning north in the spring. As an elegiac theme for funerary wall decoration, landscapes symbolized the cyclical movement of nature from birth to growth to decline and death and rebirth.

Rejecting the overtly narrative and symbolic, early Northern Sung landscape masters focused on the representation of great mountain peaks, the "bones" and structure of the earth, as the true iconic image of nature. The famous masterpiece *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains*, by Fan K'uan (active ca. 990–1030; fig. 30), epitomizes this new interest. Fan K'uan, a native of Shensi Province, first studied the styles of Kuan T'ung (active ca. 907–23; a follower of Ching Hao) and Li Ch'eng, after which, declaring that it was "better to study nature and, still better, to follow one's heart,"[31] he retired to the mountains to pursue his own inspiration. In *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains*, a large hanging scroll more than six feet in height, the great mountain peak, standing high on the shoulders of two supporting peaks, dominates the composition as the emblem of the universe. Although these great mountain forms are simple, generalized triangular masses with enveloping parallel folds, the depiction, with its pointillistic "raindrop" texture pattern and scrubby foliage on the peaks, vividly captures the landscape peculiarities of Shensi in northwest China, where trees and brush grow in wind-deposited soil on rocky mountaintops. Individual rocks and trees are viewed frontally, as discrete, additive motifs, and the treatment of space is compartmentalized. The vertical composition proceeds from front to back in three separate stages—the foreground with its minute human figures, the middle distance with massive trees, and the background with towering mountains—each with its own suggested ground plane tilting away from the viewer at a different angle. Conceived as a series of images, and read part by part and motif by motif, the great landscape represents not an actual view of nature but a conceptual vision of the macrocosmic universe.

By the mid-eleventh century, monumental landscape painting had become the official idiom of a rich and abundant culture. In his treatise on landscape painting, *Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams*, Kuo Hsi (ca. 1000–1090), the favorite court painter of the emperor Shen-tsung, offers a comprehensive summary of Northern Sung monumental landscape theory.[32] Kuo, the professional painter, begins by extolling the enjoyment of landscape painting, urging the attainment of what he calls "the heart of the forests and streams":

> How delightful to enjoy a landscape painting rendered by a skillful hand! Without leaving one's home, to be transported to streams and ravines in faraway places, the cries of monkeys and birds faintly reaching one's ears, light dappling the hills, glittering reflections on the water dazzling the eye.[33]

As an academician, Kuo, no doubt influenced by his learned scholar-official friends, advocates an educated, or learned, approach to landscape painting:



Fig. 29. *Landscapes of the Four Seasons*, ca. 1031. Detail, "Autumn." Wall painting from the tomb of Liao Sheng-tsung (r. 983–1031), approx. 110 x 75 in. (280 x 190 cm). Ch'ing-ling, eastern Mongolia

> Learning to paint is no different from learning calligraphy. Those who study Chung Yu [151–230], Wang Hsi-chih [ca. 303–ca. 361], Yü Shih-nan [558–638], and Liu Kung-ch'üan [778–865] will after a while learn to write like them. Great men and learned scholars thus do not limit themselves to one school. Rather, it is necessary to absorb and combine many models, to discuss them and study them in depth, so that one may form his own personal style.[14]

In offering a catalogue of principles for landscape painting, Kuo Hsi categorizes rock types, compositional schemata, and atmospheric and seasonal changes, creating a visual structure that gives support to the Neo-Confucian vision of man's place in a vast and complex, but ultimately orderly, universe.

In T'ang landscape painting, tentative beginnings of two contrasting types of texture patterns (*ts'un*) for modeling rocks can be discerned. One type shows softly rubbed parallel brushstrokes in the shaded crevices of rock forms with gently swelling contours, the other uses a stippled technique to describe rock surfaces with jagged edges. Kuo Hsi identifies two contrasting landscape modes, the "rocky" and the "earthen":

> Some mountains are covered with earth, others with rocks. On earthen mountains that are covered with rocks, the forests and trees are lean and tall; on rocky mountains that are covered with earth, the forests and trees are flat and luxuriant.[15]



Fig. 30. Fan K'uan (active ca. 990–1030). *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 81¼ x 40¾ in. (206.3 x 103.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

From the mid-T'ang, in the eighth century, three basic schemata had been used in the composition of mountain landscape: first, a scene dominated by tall vertical elements; second, a panoramic view filled by a series of horizontal elements; and third, a composition combining the two. The contribution of Kuo Hsi was to formulate these patterns, describing them as ways of perceiving landscape:

> From the bottom of the mountain looking up toward the top is the high distance. From the front of the mountain peering into the back of the mountain is the deep distance. From a nearby mountain looking past distant mountains is the level distance.[16]

To indicate scale, Kuo establishes a hierarchy of sizes for the human figure, the tree, and the mountain:

> In landscape painting there are three degrees of magnitude: a mountain, which is larger than a tree, which is larger than a human figure. If the mountains are not piled up by the score, and if they are no larger than the trees, they will not look imposing. And if the trees are not stacked up by the score, and if they are no larger than the human figures, they will not look large.[17]

Drawing a parallel between nature and the human world, Kuo Hsi sees the central mountain peak in a landscape composition as the emblem of "a great king, seated and facing the sun, with a hundred grandees coming to court":

> In painting a landscape one attends first to the great mountain, which is called the host peak. Once the host is fixed, one may proceed with the secondary mountains, near and far, large and small. In its domination of the whole region, the host is like a ruler among his subjects, a master among servants.[18]

Finally, to emphasize the vastness of nature and its infinite capacity for expansion, Kuo Hsi advises the painter to suggest rather than to delineate completely:

> If one wishes to make a mountain appear high, one must not paint every part of it or it will seem diminished. It will look tall when encircled at mid-height by mist and clouds. If one wishes to describe a stream that stretches afar, one must not paint its entire course; only when its course is shaded and interrupted will it appear long.[19]

According to Kuo Hsi's definition, Fan K'uan's *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains* (fig. 30) shows a high-distance view in the rocky landscape mode. In Fan's painting, it is the diminutiveness of the human figures that amplifies the sizes of the trees and mountains. Lilliputian figures are seen at the foot of an immense deciduous forest, while mountain peaks of cosmic proportions tower above. The use of a leaping scale exponentially heightens the impression of size and distance. The blank areas between the three distances serve as perceptual respites, inviting the viewer to roam freely through a space that is infinite because it is unmeasured and immeasurable.

A very different kind of landscape is *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, attributed to the tenth-century southern landscape master Tung Yüan (died 962; fig. 31), which, according to Kuo Hsi's definition, shows a level-distance view in the earthen landscape mode. A court painter of a prosperous southeastern principality of the Southern T'ang (937–76), Tung developed a style well suited to the depiction of the soft rolling hills of southern China. After the reunification of the south in 976, the southern style was brought north to K'ai-



Fig. 31. Attributed to Tung Yüan (died 962). *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks.* Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 71½ x 45⅞ in. (181.5 x 116.5 cm). Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan

feng by Tung Yüan's follower Chü-jan, though its influence was not strongly felt until the early twelfth century.

Summer Mountains (pl. 10), a high, horizontal composition formerly attributed to Fan K'uan's contemporary Yen Wen-kuei (active ca. 970–1030) but now reattributed to Ch'ü Ting (active ca. 1023–ca. 1050), a court painter who served under Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63), is a magnificent example of an officially sponsored landscape. The painting is in every way the product of an opulent culture, its very air breathing a well-endowed contentment. Following a summer shower, the verdant mountain peaks and dense foliage are suffused with a cool mist. The modeling of the rock surfaces is created by parallel texture strokes that blend into the ink wash; the gnarled white trunks of the hardwood trees are shown in relief against the moist foliage. Working in the handscroll format, which unfolds one section at a time from right to left,



the painter employs serial images, his focus moving in cinematic fashion in the development of his narrative of a holiday journey.

At the right is a panoramic level-distance vista, an aerial view of multilayered horizontal elements extending far into the distance. A fishing village occupies the foreground river shore, where large fishing boats are moored and to which small skiffs return from their day's outing. Tiny human figures in the foreground indicate the scale of the panorama. In the distant hills, wayfarers slowly making their way toward temple buildings partially hidden behind the hills—two specks along a ledge—add a temporal dimension.

As we move along the river to the left, a deep distance comes into view (pl. 10a) as tree-covered knolls and rising hills gradually build to a crescendo in a monumental host mountain that dominates the surrounding valley "like a

Pl. 10. Attributed to Ch'ü Ting (active ca. 1023–ca. 1050). *Summer Mountains.* Handscroll, ink and light color on silk, 17⅞ x 45⅜ in. (45.3 x 115.2 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.1)



Overleaf
Pl. 10a. Detail, pl. 10

ruler among his subjects, a master among servants." If we imagine ourselves as the tiny figures on the bridge, we can begin to grasp the reverential experience of journeying toward such an emblem of nature. The high-distance mountain image, while it reflects the imperial Northern Sung emphasis on centrality, symmetry, power, and domination, also epitomizes the Neo-Confucianist's desire for moral authority and spiritual grandeur.

Finally, at the left, toward the end of the scroll, a second high-distance view appears with another, smaller set of host and guest mountains, below which a mountain retreat provides rest and recreation for the travelers at the end of their long journey. Through open windows, seated men beckon to us to share their enjoyment of the lofty heart of the forests and streams and the purity of the cool, scented mountain air.







Fig. 32. Kuo Hsi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090). *Early Spring*, dated 1072. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 62¼ x 42⅝ in. (158.3 x 108.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Landscape of Emotion

By the second half of the eleventh century, when the Northern Sung court was embroiled in bitter struggles over new reform policies during the reign of the emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85), painters increasingly turned from a more objective, naturalistic landscape (the "true" landscape) to one that was imbued with human emotion (*ch'ing*).

A native of Wen-hsien, northern Honan Province, Kuo Hsi, who rose to dominate landscape painting as a court painter under Shen-tsung, exemplifies

par excellence the landscape painter of mist and sadness. From 1068 to 1083, Kuo executed wall paintings for several major imperial buildings, including the Hall of Academicians and the main halls of the three departments, the State, the Secretariat, and the Chancellery.[40] He was befriended by many leading scholar-officials, among them the grand councillors Fu Pi and Wen Yen-po, the censor Wu Chung-fu, and Su Shih and Huang T'ing-chien.

In Chapter 3, "Ideas in Painting," of his treatise *Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams*, Kuo Hsi quotes the saying "Poetry is painting without form, painting is poetry with form." "On days of leisure," he writes, "I peruse ancient and modern poetry . . . where beautiful lines seem to pour out from the poet's belly, creating vivid scenes before my eyes."[41] In attempting to re-create through landscape mental, or "idea," images (*i-ching*) and emotional states (*ch'ing-ching*) rather than merely to describe landscape realistically, Kuo moves beyond "principles" of nature. He is most drawn to the changing landscape of the seasons. "The clouds and vapors of a landscape are not the same throughout the four seasons," he notes. "In spring they are bright and harmonious, in summer dense and brooding, in autumn scattered and thin, and in winter dark and gloomy."[42] He takes delight in citing the fine distinctions of seasonal change that should be made in landscape painting:

> Within each kind of spring, summer, fall, and winter [landscape], there are an infinite number of possibilities. There are early and late, there are morning and evening. . . . For spring alone, there are myriad possibilities: spring in snow, early spring in rain, melting snow, clearing after snow in early spring, clearing after rain in early spring, mist and rain in early spring, chilly clouds in early spring, just before a spring rain, early spring in late evening, sunrise on spring mountains.[43]

Early Spring, dated 1072 (fig. 32), with its wildly twisting, turning peaks, is a landscape of the imagination. The brush technique and use of ink are rich and extravagant, as Kuo Hsi boldly casts aside precision of expression in favor of a dramatic interpenetration of solids and voids, the landscape elements simultaneously emerging from and receding behind dense, wafting mists. A highly complex landscape, *Early Spring*, though it suggests great depth, remains a composite of compartmentalized pockets of space.

Kuo Hsi's *Old Trees, Level Distance* (pl. 11), a handscroll dating to the late 1070s, shows a level-distance view of a rugged stretch of the shoreline of the Yellow River, with round boulders, gnarled trees, and tiny figures dotting the bleak late autumn landscape. On the left, two old friends, tottering and supported by servants, head for an outing in a pavilion overlooking the river; on the right, two boatmen stop midstream to exchange greetings; on the opposite shore, two heavily laden wayfarers with a donkey slowly make their way toward the distant hills. While the brushwork is animated and lively, the mood is somber and elegiac. Leaves have fallen and human figures are old and tired; the gnarled and ancient vine-covered trees show angry clawlike branches, and the bare rocks look like human skulls. The thickly applied ink renders both the



landscape and the atmosphere heavy, slowing everything down so that the scene, arrested in time, assumes the significance of an impending cosmic event.

Developing in the tradition of Li Ch'eng's trees and rocks (pl. 9), Kuo Hsi's animated forms are brilliantly expressive. In his essay, Kuo explains how he builds his forms, using many layers of ink wash:

> After the outlines are made in dark inkstrokes, I trace the outlines repeatedly with ink wash mixed with blue, so that even when the outlines remain visible, the forms appear as if emerging from the mist and dew.[44]

Compared with Ch'ü Ting's mountain forms (pl. 10a), which are clearly defined by crisp outlines and smoothly modulated ink washes, Kuo's (pl. 11a), with mottled texture strokes and layered ink washes, are fused. Kuo achieves this effect by the use of thickening-and-thinning brushstrokes in values ranging from transparent blue gray to charcoal black, which he applies simultaneously so that the ink tones run together, creating the impression of blurred, wet surfaces.

As a revered master court painter, Kuo purposely cultivated his reputation for virtuoso performance. A follower of occult Taoism, he practiced yoga.[45]

Pl. 11. Kuo Hsi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090). *Old Trees, Level Distance.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 13¾ x 41¼ in. (35.9 x 104.8 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., in honor of Douglas Dillon, 1981 (1981.276)



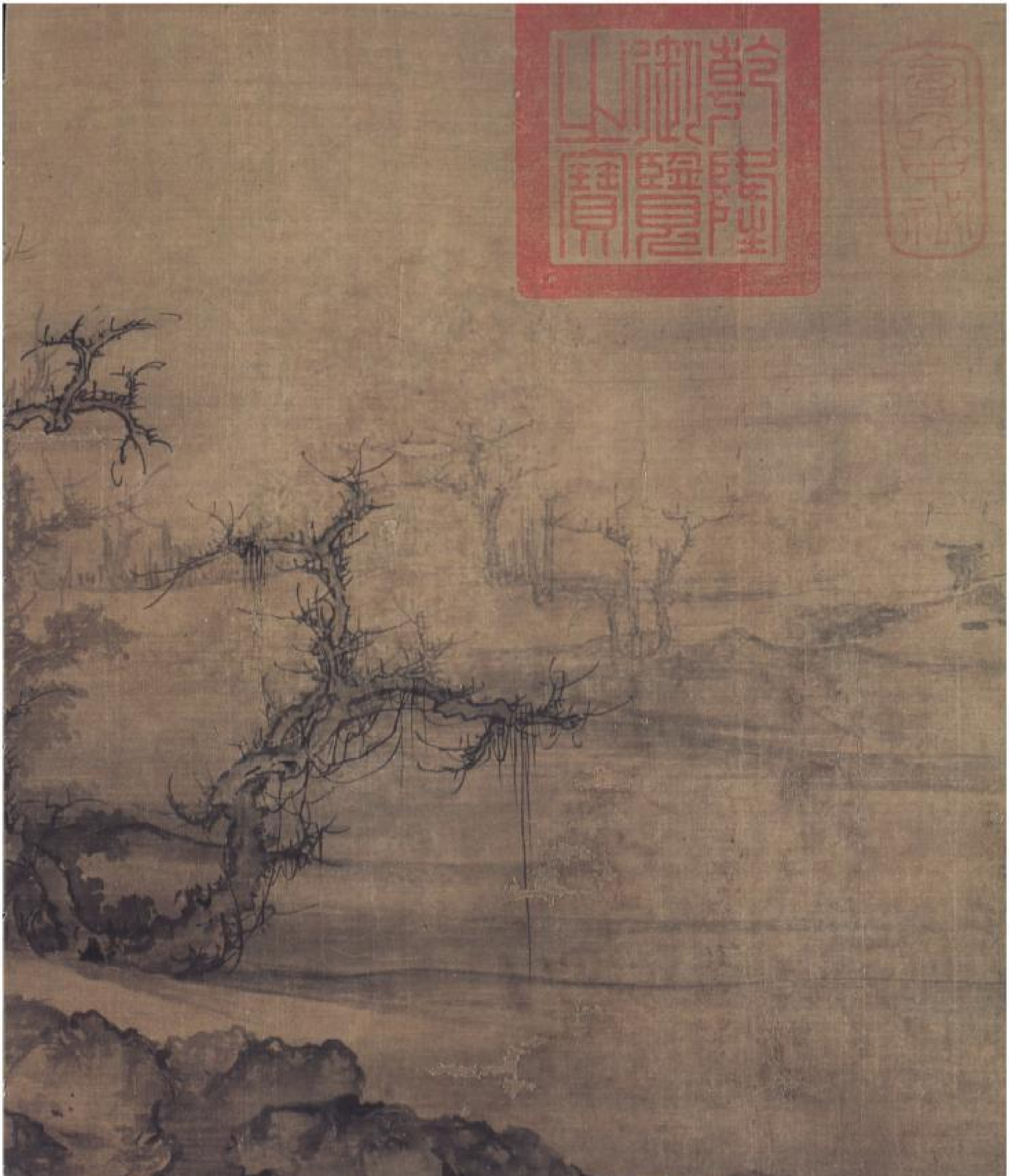
Overleaf
Pl. 11a. Detail, pl. 11

Before painting, he would meditate for several days, and then, suddenly feeling inspired, would "toss off the work with a single sweep of his arm."[46] In *Old Trees, Level Distance*, the ecstatic frenzy of Kuo's brushwork recalls the "untrammeled" painters of the T'ang dynasty, who would abandon themselves to the act of painting, splattering ink and spreading it on the surface with their hands.[47] Kuo's trees and rocks, shimmering, luminous, menacing, and vividly transcending the ordinary, seem endowed with magical powers. A story by the twelfth-century writer Teng Ch'un tells of the painter's fascination with forms that seemed to materialize of their own accord:

> [Kuo] told the wall plasterer not to use the trowel, but instead to throw the plaster on the wall. . . . After the plaster had dried, applying ink to modify the forms, he created mountain peaks, forests, and valleys, . . . making them look as if they had been realized in heaven.[48]

With the art of Kuo Hsi, we encounter a new landscape style. Defined by the poetry of mist, it celebrates change and transitoriness. But above all, it is an art in which human emotion (*ch'ing*) is newly incorporated as a compelling reality.





Overleaf
Pl. 12a. Detail, pl. 12



Fig. 33. Wang Shen (ca. 1036–after 1104). *Misty River and Layered Peaks*, ca. 1084. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 17¾ x 65⅜ in. (45.2 x 166 cm). Shanghai Museum

Landscape of Exile

In the second half of the eleventh century, during the reign of Kuo Hsi's patron the emperor Shen-tsung, Northern Sung art and culture were at their zenith. A galaxy of brilliant scholars, philosophers, and men of arts and letters lived and worked in the Sung capital, Pien-ching. It was, however, during these very years that all the best human resources were squandered by Wang An-shih's unsuccessful reform policies and the ensuing political struggles between his supporters and his detractors. Scarcely twenty years after Shen-tsung's death, in the early years of the twelfth century, an entire generation of talented men was gone—many of them having died in political exile—and affairs of state, both domestic and foreign, had broken down beyond repair. In 1126, the Jurchen Chin invaders marched from the northeast and sacked the capital, and the Northern Sung dynasty came to its tragic end.

Wang Shen (ca. 1036–after 1104), a gifted follower of Kuo Hsi, was married to a sister of Shen-tsung; she died young in 1080. Holding Wang responsible for the princess's untimely death, the grieving emperor sent Wang into exile. After being reinstated in the capital in 1084, Wang painted *Misty River and Layered Peaks* (fig. 33). A melancholy landscape poem that expresses the poignancy of lost hopes, loves, and friendships, the painting represents the brooding dream world of the unhappy exile. When the painter's friend Su Shih saw the painting, he wrote the following poem:

> In the mountains you look past the edge of the sun,
> Seeing not the capital, Ch'ang-an, but only clouds and mists.
> Returning to Ch'ang-an, you glance back at the mountains.
> How times have changed!

Pl. 12. After Fan K'uan (active ca. 990–1030). *Landscape in the Style of Fan K'uan*, early 12th century. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 64⅞ x 40⅞ in. (165.8 x 103.8 cm). Gift of Irene and Earl Morse, 1956 (56.151)







Pipes and strings are no more, guests have long departed;
Only the moated carriage roads remain . . .
Never will you forget your days of exile;
While making merry, you will always sing of the mountain prison.[49]

The great symbolic landscapes, while they are monumental evocations of the early Northern Sung at the turn of the twelfth century, also reflect major changes that occurred at this time. *Landscape in the Style of Fan K'uan* (pl. 12), a large hanging scroll by an anonymous early twelfth-century painter, continues the early eleventh-century brush idiom of Fan K'uan (fig. 30). Here, however, the master's angular, nervously charged contour strokes and pointillistic dots are softened, transformed into a generalized surface to suggest a hazy atmosphere. Overlapping mountain silhouettes, ranged from front to back in a continuous sequence, dissolve at their base into surrounding mist, creating a unified image. This new vision (as in Wang Shen's painting, fig. 33) is achieved at the expense of both objective clarity and the intimation of endless space, qualities that had distinguished the early Northern Sung works of Fan K'uan and Ch'ü Ting (pl. 10). The landscape is now pushed back in space, creating a psychological remove.

As a transitional work that marks the threshold of change between the monumental and the intimate and personal, *Landscape in the Style of Fan K'uan* speaks a language of crisis. The composition builds a sense of tension, an unsettling surreality, by the use of the leaping scale of the three magnitudes—tiny figures, large trees, and enormous mountains—the dwarfed figures appearing trapped in a frozen, unnatural space. The significant difference between this painting and the masterpiece by Fan K'uan is the spiritual gulf that separates them. Here, we sense the malaise and anxiety that pervaded the world of the late Northern Sung. By the early twelfth century, when good government had been irretrievably lost and men of principle had left the capital, the monumental landscape idiom itself became a thing of the past. For by then, most landscape painters had exchanged a vision of clarity, one that had attained "truth," for a vision of uneasy foreboding, clouded by mists and fog.

An Earthly Paradise

At the beginning of the twelfth century, a dramatic shift of taste in landscape painting, from Kuo Hsi's extravagant naturalism to a refined antiquarianism, occurred under the patronage of Emperor Hui-tsung's (r. 1100–25) Painting Academy. Teng Ch'un recounts that Hui-tsung, as soon as he became emperor, ordered the removal from his palaces of all pictures by Kuo Hsi, his father, Shen-tsung's, favorite painter. When Teng Ch'un's own father served on the Imperial Privy Council, he was given a new mansion by the emperor. One day he discovered that a workman sent from the palace was dusting the furniture with a piece of silk. The silk turned out to be a painting by Kuo Hsi, recycled as a dust rag.[50]

With a full cycle of developing naturalism completed in the second half of the eleventh century, early twelfth-century painters, under the influence of the Academy, began to codify their techniques and to develop a new approach to landscape. Whereas earlier landscape painters had devised new representational techniques, Hui-tsung's academic painters used formulaic brush idioms and compositional schemata to illustrate literary and poetic themes. Han Cho (active ca. 1119–26), for example, catalogued individual landscape techniques, giving different names to specific texture patterns (*ts'un*) for modeling rocks:

> There is the *p'i-ma* [draping hemp fiber] *ts'un*, the *tien-ts'o* [dotting and crossing] *ts'un*, . . . the *cho-t'a* [cutting] *ts'un*, the *heng* [horizontal] *ts'un*, and the *yün-erh-lien-shui* [uniform and connected, waterlike] *ts'un*. For every dot and every stroke, there is an ancient and a modern school, and special methods and rules.[11]

Han's academic approach marked a new direction in landscape painting, a return, on the one hand, to earlier models for inspiration, and an exploration, on the other, of linear and schematic abstraction and surface pattern.

Retreats in Spring Hills (pl. 13), a handscroll composition by an unknown master executed in the archaic mineral-green color scheme, can be dated stylistically to the early twelfth century. Clusters of mountain peaks are ranged horizontally in space in three compositional movements, the central, overlapping peaks comprising both pointed and flat-topped formations (pl. 13a). The mountains, trees, and clouds are drawn in a schematic idiom; the outlines and



Fig. 34. *Illustration to the Sutra of the Law (Fa-hua ching)*, T'ang dynasty, 7th century. Detail, "Landscape." Wall painting from Cave 217, Tun-huang, Kansu Province



texture strokes of the rocks are threadlike and linear; evergreens and deciduous trees are depicted in needled or dotted patterns; and encircling mists are delineated as outlined cloud scrolls.

As a color scheme, the "blue-and-green" (*ch'ing-lü*) idiom, exemplified in *Retreats in Spring Hills*, refers to the archaic, flat, and decorative landscape styles of the pre-T'ang and T'ang periods (fig. 34), in which schematic mountain motifs are filled with bright and solid mineral-blue (azurite) and green (malachite or copper carbonate) colors. Because of its use in the occult Taoist's alchemical practices,[52] the malachite-green color scheme is also associated with the representation of the theme of the Taoist immortals. The clustered peaks in *Retreats in Spring Hills* hark back to the archaic space cells of Wang Wei's *Wang-ch'uan Villa* (fig. 27), while the flat and opaque mineral-green color scheme, in supressing natural shading, evokes the ethereal quality of T'ao Ch'ien's "Peach Blossom Spring," in which a timeless landscape is defined structurally as beyond change.[53] The schematic landscape is a visionary one, the emerald-green mountains seeming to float above sheets of water and encircling mists. Unlike Ch'ü Ting's *Summer Mountains* (pl. 10), which, with its streams and passes winding through towering mountains, invites the viewer to roam freely in space, *Retreats in Spring Hills* is a picture of myth and memory, spatially closed to the viewer and reflecting the artist's inner world. Structurally, it resembles *Landscape in the Style of Fan K'uan* (pl. 12), in which overlapping forms range from front to back in a unified spatial continuum. The dating of the composition to the twelfth century is confirmed archaeologically

Pl. 13. Unidentified artist (first half of 12th century). *Retreats in Spring Hills*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10½ x 110¾ in. (26.7 x 281.6 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.8)

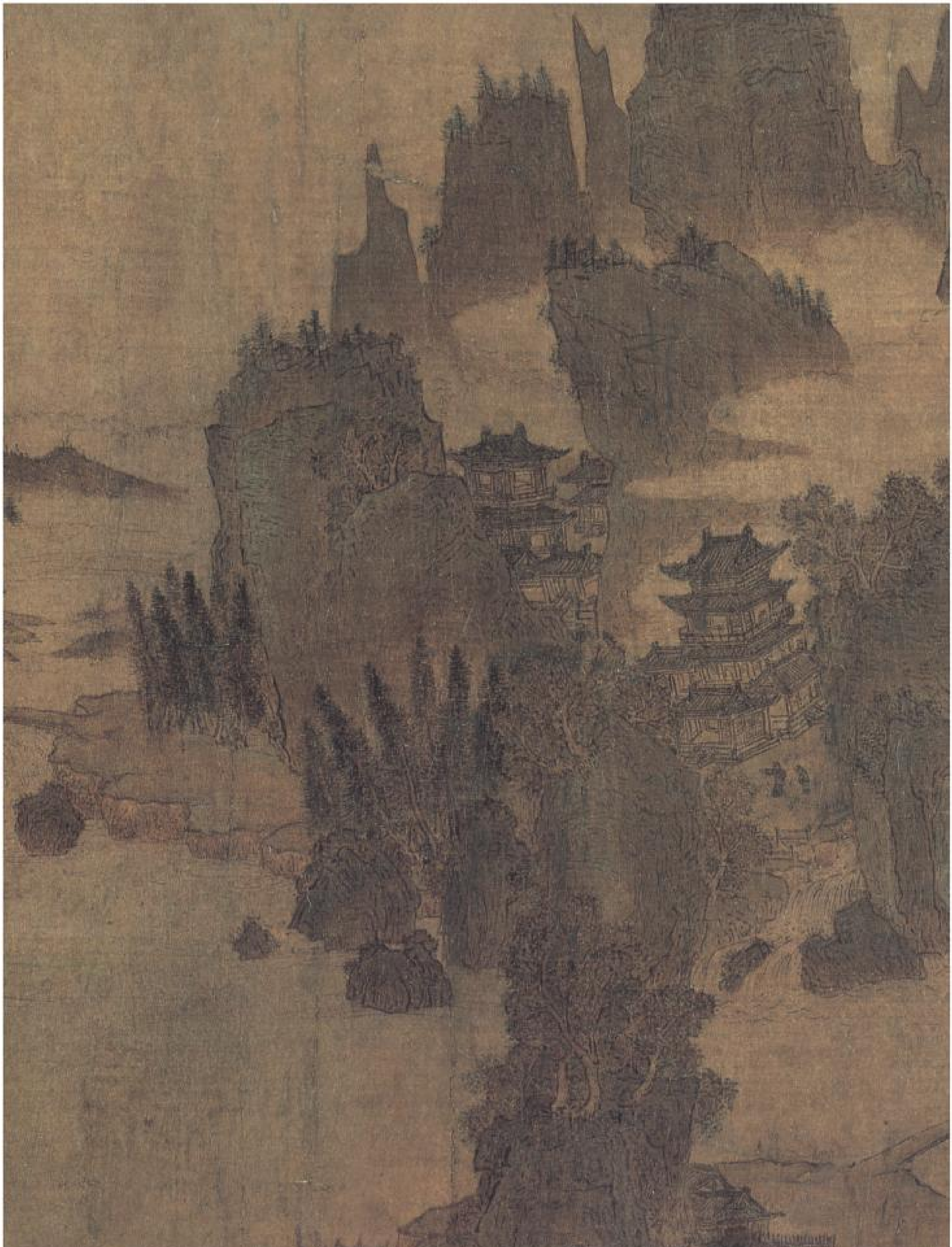
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Pl. 13a. Unidentified artist (first half of 12th century). Detail from *Retreats in Spring Hills*



by landscape fragments discovered at Kara-khoto, a Central Asian site datable to between 1032 and 1226 (fig. 35). In the horizontal picture fragments, nervous but fluent brushstrokes depict floating mountain peaks. The overlapping mountain forms do not yet describe a ground plane; rather, mountain forms are seen frontally and individually, fanning out in parallel vertical planes like a deck of playing cards. Each mountain form fades into mist and water, thus avoiding the problem of building a fully articulated mountain base.

Fig. 35. *Landscape*, late 12th–early 13th century. Fragment of a drawing on silk, discovered in Kara-khoto from a site datable to between 1032 and 1226









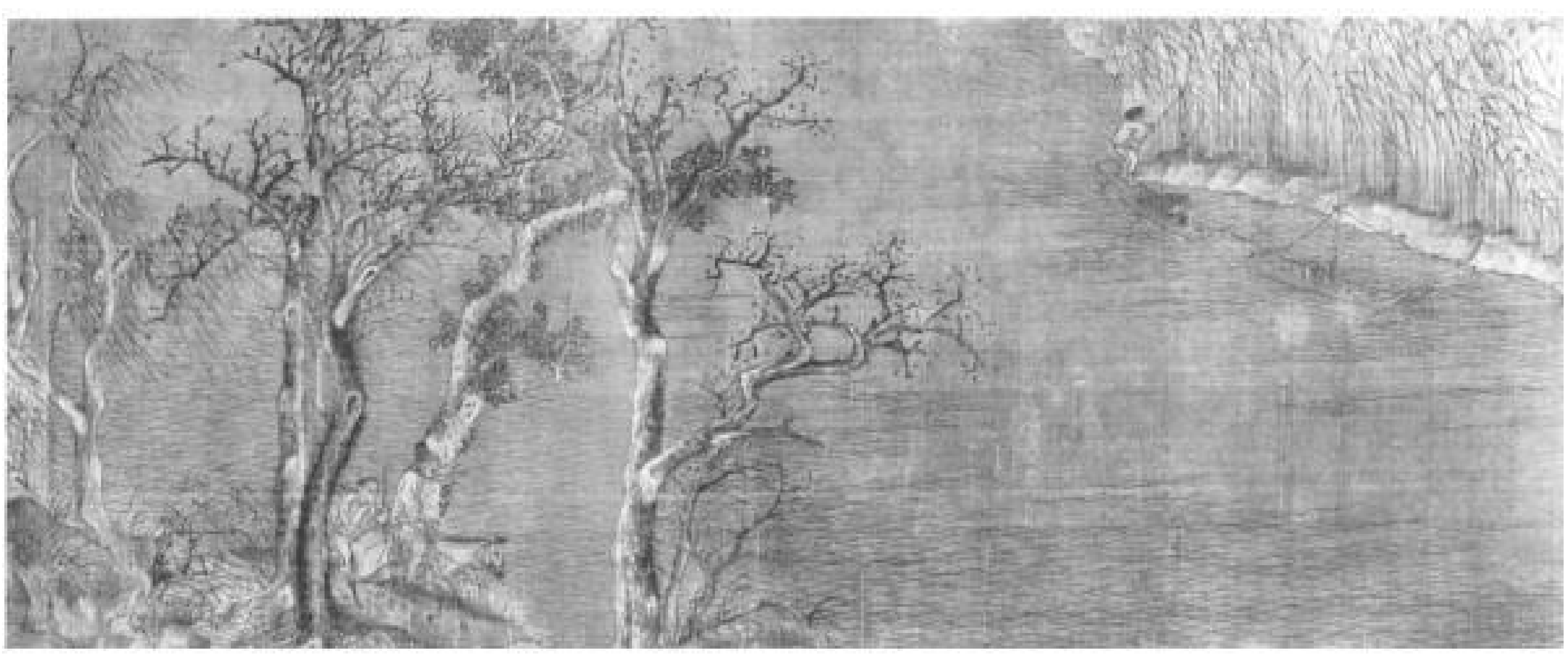
Realistic Landscape

After the destruction of the Northern Sung capital by the armies of the invading Jurchen Chin in early 1127, Prince K'ang, the ninth son of Hui-tsung, was proclaimed the new emperor, Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62), and a Southern Sung court was established in Lin-an (modern Hangchow, Chekiang Province) in 1138. Although ruling only the southern half of the empire, the Southern Sung, supported by the agricultural wealth and expanding commerce, trade, and industry of the Chiang-nan area, enjoyed unprecedented material abundance.

Under the Southern Sung Painting Academy, re-established in Lin-an in the 1160s, the landscape idioms of the early Northern Sung developed in

Pl. 14. Attributed to Liu Sung-nien (active ca. 1175–after 1195), after Kao K'o-ming (ca. 1000–1053). *Streams and Mountains Under Fresh Snow.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 16⅜ x 95⁷⁄₁₆ in. (41.7 x 242.4 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1984 (1984.274)

Fig. 36. Chao Kan (active ca. 961–75). *Early Snow on the River.* Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10¼ x 148¼ in. (25.9 x 376.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei





Overleaf
Pl. 14a. Detail, pl. 14

two seemingly different directions: on the one hand, there was the realistic depiction of the soft, lush landscape of the south, and, on the other, a schematic archaistic style, which reflected a nostalgic return to the lost monumental northern landscape.

Streams and Mountains Under Fresh Snow (pl. 14), a handscroll formerly attributed to the early Northern Sung court landscapist Kao K'o-ming (ca. 1000–1053), is now reattributed to the Southern Sung court painter Liu Sung-nien (active ca. 1175–after 1195). Kao's name is inscribed at the beginning of the scroll, in the distinctive style of the Southern Sung emperor Li-tsung (r. 1224–64; see pl. 38). Barnhart speculates that the scroll is an adaptation by Liu Sung-nien recalling a Northern Sung palace wall painting executed by Kao in the 1030s.[54] The original composition, which shows large foreground trees rising from the bottom to the top of the scroll, is in turn probably similar to that of the late tenth-century handscroll *Early Snow on the River*, by Chao Kan (active ca. 961–75; fig. 36). In Chao's composition, spatial organization is additive and there is no unified ground plane.

In the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century adaptation, however, there is a realistically represented Chiang-nan scene. Both in motifs and in composition, *Streams and Mountains Under Fresh Snow* closely resembles the winter scene in Liu Sung-nien's *Landscapes of the Four Seasons* (fig. 37). Morning stirs peacefully along a quiet riverbank covered by a light snow. In the foreground, flanked by large deciduous hardwood trees and majestic twisting pines that rise to the full height of the silk, is a hermitage, in which a seated gentleman and two servants warm themselves with a brazier in the front hall. To the left of the pines, a man sets out on the river in a houseboat, and farther to the left,





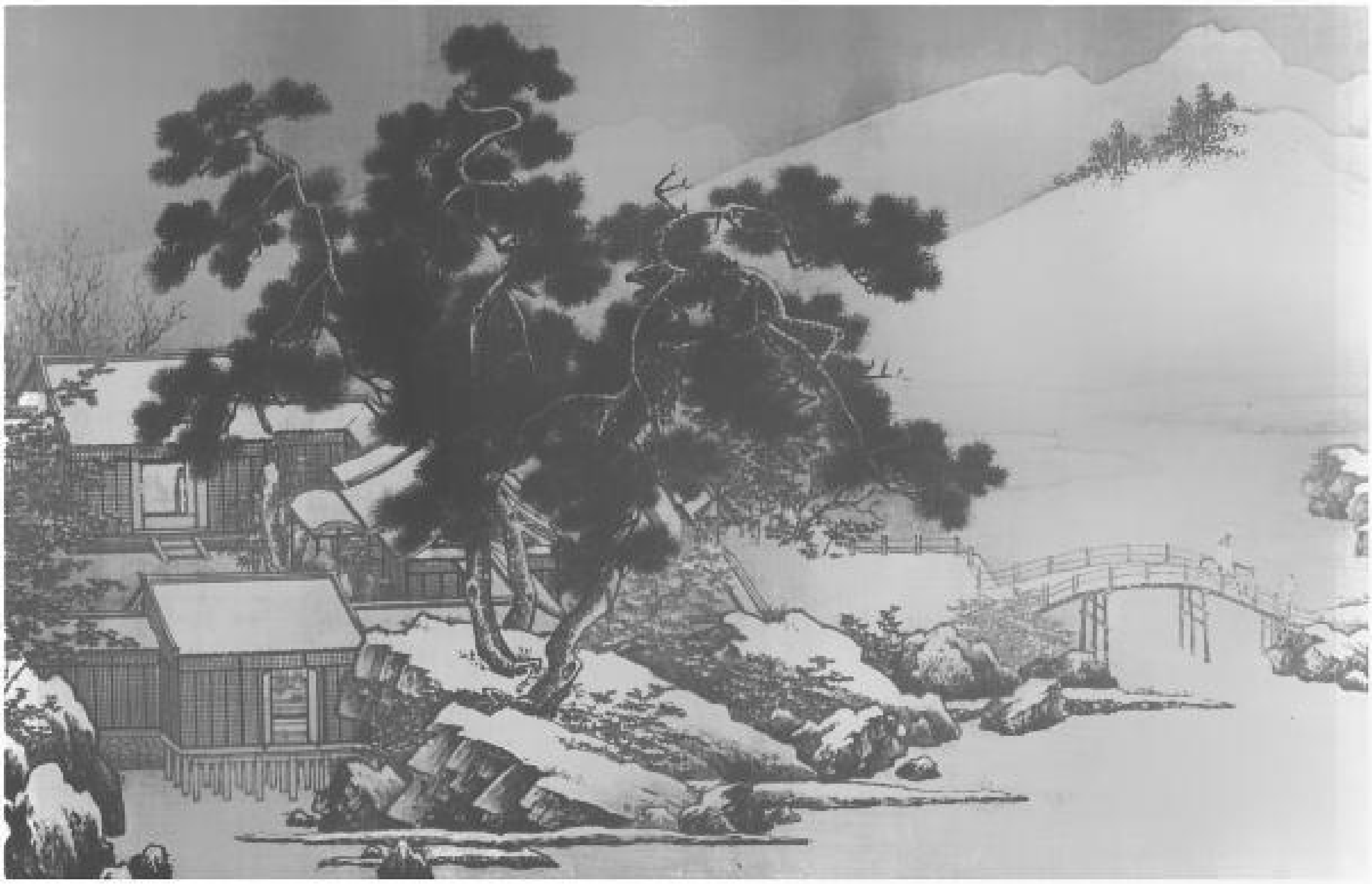


Fig. 57. Liu Sung-nien (active ca. 1175–after 1195). *Landscapes of the Four Seasons*. Detail, "Winter Scene." Handscroll in four sections, ink and color on silk, each section 16¼ x 27⅜ in. (41.2 x 69.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

on the opposite bank, along a path with lush bamboos and rustling pines, a lone traveler, bearing a shoulder pole, begins his day's journey.

The landscape elements, drawn with a sure sense of perspective and foreshortening, are treated as a spatially integrated physical environment (pl. 14a). The rocks are modeled with bold ax-cut strokes, a hallmark of the Southern Sung Academy style under the influence of Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s; fig. 79). Particularly striking is the organization of the landscape elements, arranged along a receding ground plane.

If we compare the early thirteenth-century *Streams and Mountains Under Fresh Snow* with *Travelers in a Wintry Forest* (pl. 9), which dates to the early twelfth century but follows a tenth-century composition, we can discern a distinct evolution. In the earlier work, the triangular spits of land that form the shoreline are flat silhouettes stacked vertically on the picture plane, overlapping at the top but disappearing into the silk at the base; discrete frontal motifs, they range sequentially through space, without a receding ground plane. In *Streams and Mountains*, on the other hand, diagonally foreshortened plateau motifs are skillfully employed to describe a ground plane that continuously recedes and links the landscape elements. Landscape elements are no longer only laterally placed or superimposed vertically on the picture plane; rather, they are now seen in the context of spatial recession.

Landscape of Nostalgia

By the thirteenth century, the heroic format of Northern Sung monumental landscape was considered archaic. Side by side with lyric realism, there developed in late Southern Sung painting an opposite tendency for linearity and schematic surface abstraction, a predilection most clearly expressed in the archaistic landscape idiom that looks back to the grand manner of the early Northern Sung. *A Bridge Over a Stream Among Steep Mountains* (fig. 38), an anonymous fan painting, exemplifies the essence of the archaistic formula. A bird's-eye view of a vast expanse of mountain peaks depicted by triangular motifs with parallel folds, it shows a schematic "raindrop" surface pattern reminiscent of the early Northern Sung mountain textures of Fan K'uan (fig. 30) and of Fan's Five Dynasties progenitors Ching Hao (ca. 870– ca. 930) and Kuan T'ung (active ca. 907–23). There are no trees, but only foliage dots along the contours of the mountains to reinforce the design. Despite this schematic archaism, the realistic compositional structure of the painting dates it to the middle of the thirteenth century; as the triangular mountains pile up on the picture plane, their curving shorelines merge convincingly into the distance, following a continuously receding ground plane.

Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains (pl. 15), a handscroll painted about 1250 and bearing a spurious signature of the early Northern Sung master Yen Wen-kuei (active ca. 970–1030), shows a Southern Sung interpretation of Yen's

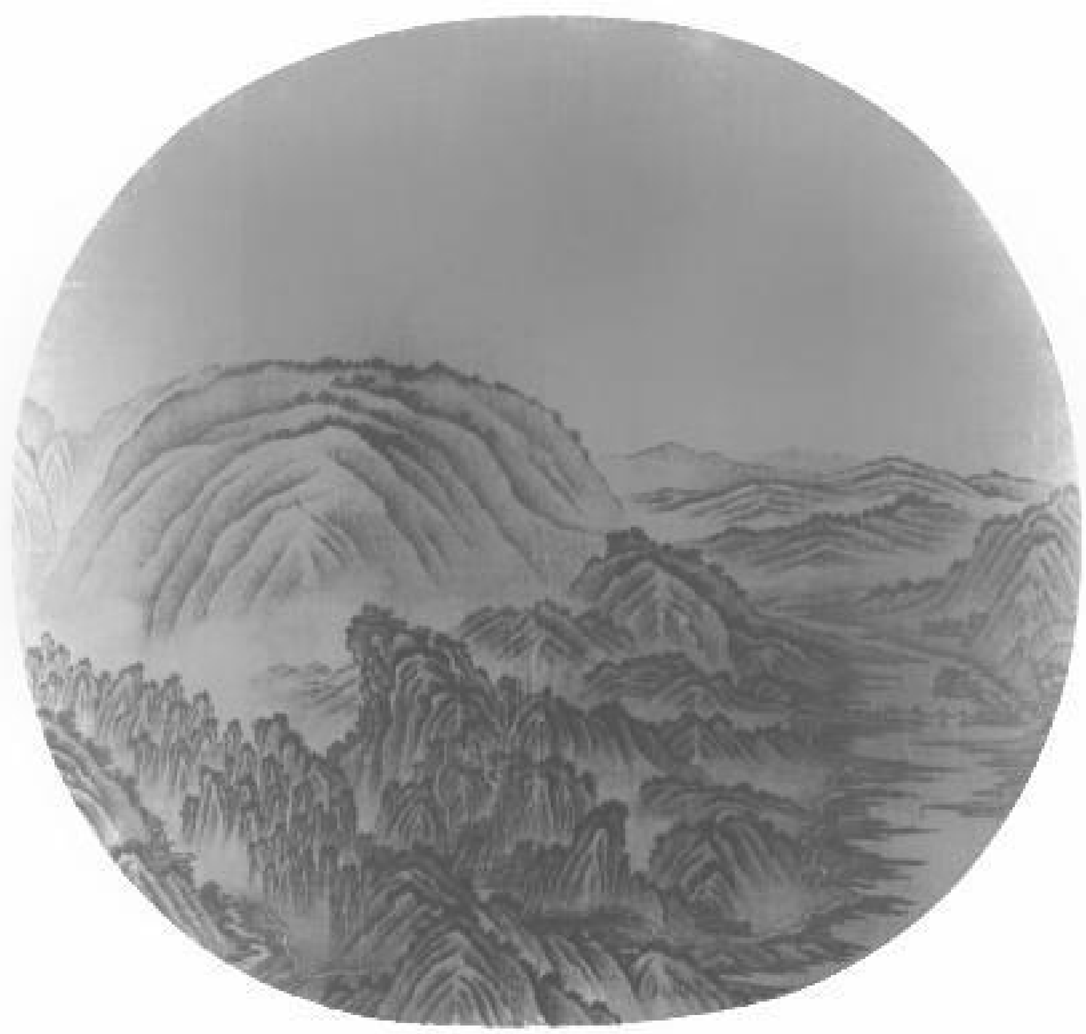


Fig. 38. Unidentified artist (mid-13th century). *A Bridge Over a Stream Among Steep Mountains.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 9⅞ x 10⅝ in. (25 x 27 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shen-yang



monumental landscape style. Modeled after a composition similar to Yen Wen-kuei's *Pavilions Among Rivers and Mountains* (fig. 39), it displays scallop-edged mountain folds with a mixed dotted and ax-cut texture pattern and intricately drawn spiky branched trees in the tradition of Li Ch'eng and Kuo Hsi. Painted at a time when Southern Sung landscapists usually depicted Chiang-nan in a softly intimate and naturalistic style (pl. 54), the archaistic idiom represented an expressionist mode with a strong emotional element. In precisely drawn hard-edged images, the handscroll created for the southern urban dwellers a nostalgic return to the heroic mountains and streams of their lost northern homeland.

The realistic landscape structure of *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains* is achieved at the expense of its power to suggest infinite space. When compared with the awesome vistas of the early Northern Sung landscapes of Yen

Pl. 15. After Yen Wen-kuei (active ca. 970–1030). *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains*, mid-13th century. Detail. Handscroll, ink and light color on silk, 12 13/16 x 126 1/2 in. (32.5 x 321.4 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1983 (1983.12)

Fig. 39. Yen Wen-kuei (active ca. 970–1030). *Pavilions Among Rivers and Mountains*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and light color on paper, 12 1/2 x 63 1/2 in. (32 x 161 cm). Osaka Municipal Museum of Art





Wen-kuei and Ch'ü Ting (pl. 10), its peaks and valleys seem physically contained and measurable. In marking the end of the monumental tradition of landscape painting, however, this archaistic work of the thirteenth century, with its schematic texture pattern, nevertheless defines and establishes the early Northern Sung Fan K'uan–Yen Wen-kuei landscape idiom for later landscape painters. By the time a full-scale revival of Northern Sung styles was under way during the fourteenth century, this handscroll composition had become an important prototype for late Yüan and early Ming landscape painters, who increasingly turned to art rather than to nature for inspiration.

1. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (New York: Icon, 1979), p. ix.
2. For T'ao Ch'ien's "Peach Blossom Spring," see Herbert A. Giles, *Gems of Chinese Literature*, 2d ed. (London: B. Quaritch, 1923), pp. 104–5.
3. Tu Fu, *Tu Kung-pu shih-chi* (The Poems of Tu Fu) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1972), vol. 1, p. 58.
4. The term "space cells" was first used by Ludwig Bachhofer in *A Short History of Chinese Art* (New York: Pantheon, 1946), pp. 94–97.
5. Tsuji Nobuo discusses T'ang cityscapes in "Rakuchû-rakugai-zu and the Beauty of Tang: Two Observations from the Viewpoint of Comparative Art History Between China and Japan," in *International Symposium on Art Historical Studies, 4th, 1985, Kyōto: The Representation of Genre in East Asian Art*, edited by Shimada Shūjirō (Osaka: Society for International Exchange of Art Historical Studies, Osaka University, 1986), pp. 54–58.
6. For the history of transmission of these two compositions, see Robert E. Harrist, Jr., "A Scholar's Landscape: *Shan-chuang t'u* by Li Kung-lin" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1988), pp. 192ff.
7. For Wang Wei's life and painting, see Marsha L. Wagner, *Wang Wei* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981); for translations of Wang Wei's quatrains, see Pauline Yu, *The Poetry of Wang Wei: New Translations and Commentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).
8. For a study of the different surviving versions of the composition, see Kohara Hironobu, "Ōi-ga to sono denshō sakuhin" (Wang Wei's Paintings and Attributed Works), in *Bunjinga suihen* (A Selective Collection of Literati Painting) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 125–45.
9. The scholar is pictured in various settings: seated in the Thatched Lodge, in the Leafy Shade Lodge, under the Canopy over Green Court, in the Chamber of Understanding the Origin, lounging by the Cloud Brocade Torrent, by the Soothing Rapids, or standing atop the Upside-Down (that is, reflecting) Terrace, and the Pillowing Mist Plateau. For a discussion of the problems relating to this set of paintings, see Hsü Fu-kuan, *Chung-kuo i-shu ching-shen* (The Spirit of Chinese Art) (T'ai-chung: Tung-hai Ta-hsüeh, 1966), pp. 485–525.
10. See Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 133, 182.
11. See Fung [Feng] Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, translated by Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952–53), vol. 2, pp. 465ff.
12. See ibid., p. 491.
13. See John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1985); and Richard M. Barnhart, *Wintry Forests, Old Trees: Some Landscape Themes in Chinese Painting*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1972).
14. See Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties; completed 847), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 121.
15. See Shimada Shūjirō, "Ippin gafū ni tsuite," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 161 (1950), p. 267; translated by James F. Cahill, "Concerning the I-p'in Style of Painting, I," *Oriental Art* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1961), p. 68.
16. See under Chang Ts'ao, in Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 121.
17. See Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1973), vol. 1, p. 605; for an English translation, see Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush* (Ascona, Switz.: Artibus Asiae, 1974), pp. 12, 21 n. 14.
18. Ibid.
19. See Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2, especially pp. 435–42, 454–64.
20. See Willard J. Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 1 (June 1982), pp. 67–116.
21. See Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 1, p. 607.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 608.
24. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi* (A Continuation of the History of Painting; preface dated 1167), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 9, p. 71.
25. Mi Fu, *Hua-shih* (History of Painting); quoted in Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Sung Liao Chin hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Sung, Liao, and Chin Dynasties) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), p. 161.
26. See Barnhart, *Wintry Forests, Old Trees*, pp. 16–17, 28.
27. See Wai-kam Ho, "Li Ch'eng and the Mainstream of Northern Sung Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 18–24 June 1970* (Taipei, 1972), pp. 251–83.

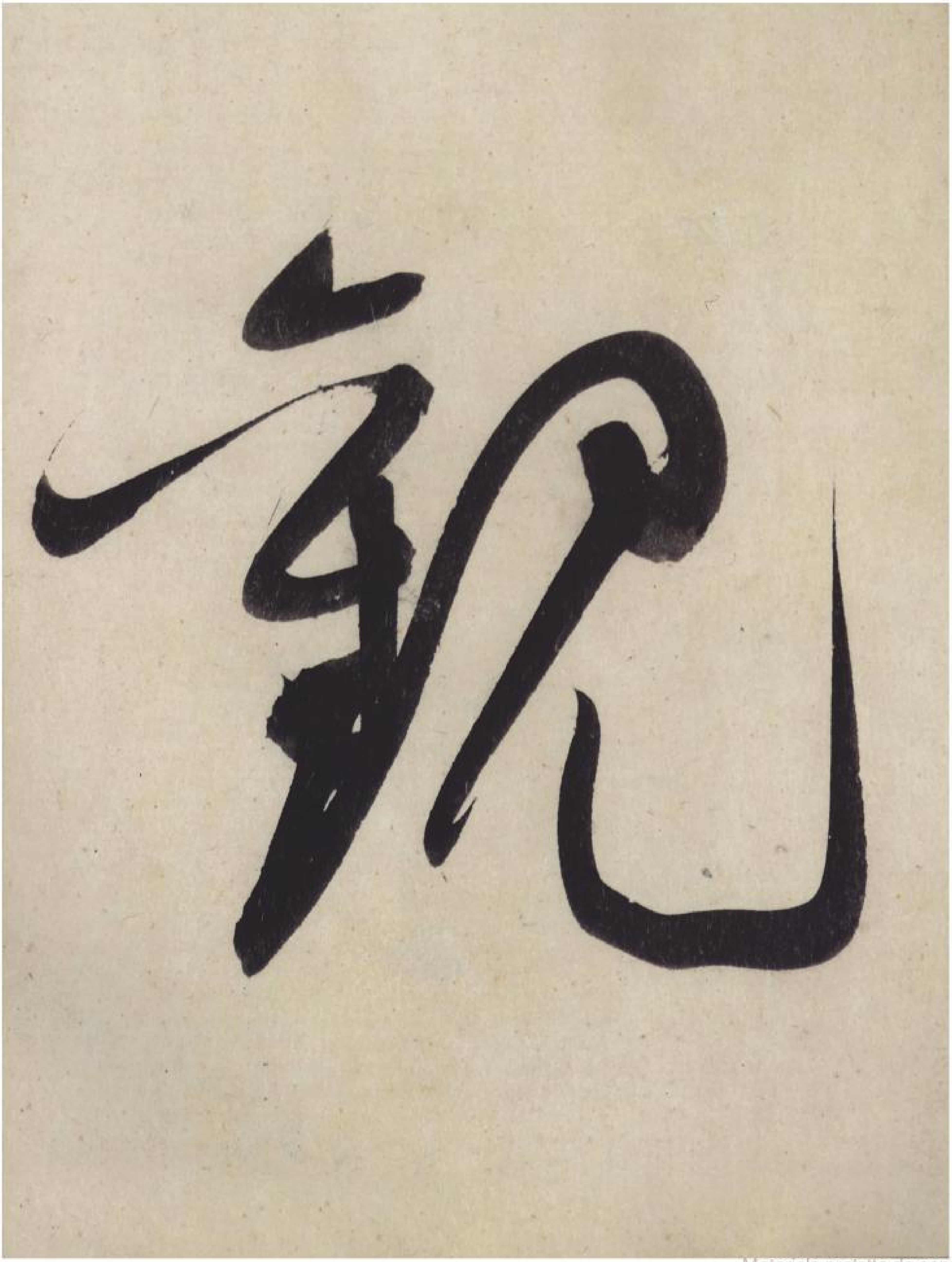
   In dating *Travelers in a Wintry Forest* to the early twelfth century, we follow the analytical scheme as proposed in Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984),

pp. 20–22, figs. 13–15. According to this analysis, landscape composition from about 700 to about 1300 developed in three distinct stages. In the first stage, additive motifs recede in separate sequences (ca. 700–ca. 1050); in the second, motifs range back in a continuous sequence (ca. 1050–ca. 1250); and in the third, elements are integrated spatially along a continuous ground plane (ca. 1250–ca. 1300). In *Travelers in a Wintry Forest*, the snow-covered mountain slopes that range from the foreground into the background are stacked up vertically on the picture plane. This method of suggesting continuous recession without an integrating ground plane dates the painting to the early twelfth century.

28. See Hiromitsu Ogawa, "Inchū no meiga" (Famous Paintings in the Academy), in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen* (Essays on Chinese Painting in Honor of Professor Suzuki Kei's Sixtieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 23–85.
29. Ibid., p. 34.
30. A phrase used to describe a work by the early Northern Sung master Yen Wen-kuei; see translation by Alexander C. Soper of *Kuo Johsü's Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wen chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), p. 173, n. 504.
31. *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era; preface dated 1120), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 11, p. 117.
32. Kuo Hsi's *Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams* (*Lin-ch'üan kao-chih*), compiled by his son Kuo Ssu, comprises the following chapters:

    1. Preface by Kuo Ssu
    2. Lessons on Landscape (Shan-shui hsün)
    3. Ideas in Painting (Hua-i)
    4. Methods of Painting (Hua-chüeh)
    5. Topics of Painting (Hua-t'i)
    6. Notes on the Paintings of Kuo Hsi (Hua-ko shih-i)
    7. The Record of [Kuo Hsi's] Painting (Hua-chi)
    8. Colophon by Hsü Kuang-ning, dated May 24, 1117

    See Suzuki Kei, "Rinsen kōchi shū no gaki to Kakuki ni tsuite" (Kuo Hsi and "The Record of [Kuo Hsi's] Painting" in Kuo's *Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams*), *Bijutsushi* 109 (November 1980), pp. 1–11; translated into Chinese by Wang Wei-ming, "Lin-ch'üan kao-chih chi Hua-chi yü Kuo Hsi," *Mei-shu yen-chiu* 4 (1982), pp. 70–76.
33. See Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 1, p. 632.
34. Ibid., p. 633.
35. Ibid., p. 642.
36. Ibid., p. 639.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 642.
39. Ibid., p. 639.
40. See Suzuki Kei, *Chūgoku kaigashi* (History of Chinese Painting) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 231ff.
41. Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 1, p. 640.
42. Ibid., p. 634.
43. Ibid., p. 644.
44. Ibid., p. 643.
45. Ibid., p. 631.
46. "The Record of [Kuo Hsi's] Painting" (Hua-chi); see Suzuki, "Rinsen kōchi shū no gaki to Kakuki ni tsuite," p. 3.
47. See Shimada, "Ippin gafū ni tsuite," p. 267; translated by Cahill, "Concerning the I-p'in Style," p. 68.
48. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 9, p. 72.
49. See Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, pp. 434–35.
50. See Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 76.
51. See Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 2, p. 667; see also Robert Maeda, *Two Twelfth-Century Texts on Chinese Painting*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, 8 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1970), p. 25.
52. See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), vol. 5, part 2, p. 209, note b.
53. See Giles, *Gems of Chinese Literature*, pp. 104–5.
54. See Richard M. Barnhart, "*Streams and Hills Under Fresh Snow*, Attributed to Kao K'o-ming," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 223–46.



3 *The Art of the Scholar-Officials*

During the Northern Sung period there existed a close correlation between art and politics. In the second half of the eleventh century, imperial China witnessed the tragic failure of the most ambitious court-initiated political and social reform ever attempted. As a result, a schism developed within the Confucian state between imperial state power and the scholar-officials' ideological moral authority.[1] Yet, during the same years, some of the most revered of China's cultural and artistic figures—Su Shih, Li Kung-lin, Huang T'ing-chien, and Mi Fu, among others—created a brilliant artistic revival that has led some modern scholars to describe the period as the Chinese Renaissance.[2] It was a time of growing imperial absolutism and moral crisis, but it was also a time during which scholar-official artists, through the study of art and the cultivation of the self, broke away from official conventions to create new, individualistic styles.

The central figure in this historical and cultural drama was the scholar-official, whose personal and political dilemma is best described in Li Kung-lin's illustration for Chapter 17 of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (pl. 8e). In the upper left, a scholar-official "advances at the court . . . [thinking] only of discharging his duties to the fullest"; in the lower right, the same man, now sequestered in his private garden, either in exile or in retirement, contemplates "amending his errors." Li's illustration, in presenting the two sides of the scholar-official's life, the public and the private, points to the confrontation of two conflicting Confucian ideals, that of political engagement, on the one hand, and that of moral self-cultivation, on the other. In Confucian society, where commerce and trade were deemed (in principle) unimportant and their implementation was relegated to the lower classes, the scholar's choice in life was either to serve the emperor in government or, in retirement, to venture into the world of arts and letters.

The scholar-officials of the late Northern Sung lived at a time when an emergent psychological reality demanded a new mode of expression reflecting a changed world, a world that could no longer be described by the narrative and didactic conventions of the artisan painters. Rejecting the imitation of outward reality—Su Shih boldly condemned "anyone who judges painting by form-likeness [as having] merely the insight of a child"[3]—they experimented with "unlikeness" (*pu-ssu*) and with the unbeautiful in an attempt to express their own inner vision, and through an exploration of the self, they discovered

Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). Detail from *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju* (pl. 18)

and defined their own individuality, creating an art that is subtle, cerebral, and introverted, and in its complex derivation from ancient forms, often difficult and profound.

Politics and Art

Scholar-official art, because it was a direct outgrowth of the political and social fabric of the Northern Sung, must thus be understood within the context of that world. The first Sung emperor, T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), a young general who usurped the throne in 960 at the age of thirty-two, saw as his greatest objective the subordination of military forces to the central government. The most significant corollary of this effort was the emperor's show of deference to the Confucian scholar-officials, symbolized by his admonition to his successors to refrain from punishing court officials by execution, to the extent that throughout the Sung dynasty the dual principles of downgrading the military and upholding Confucian ideals remained the cornerstones of official policy.

With an improved education and examination system, the Confucian dream of having young scholars from humble origins rise within the political bureaucracy to serve the state was not only attainable but seemed to offer unlimited possibilities. The scholar-officials, once presented with such opportunities, proved to be competitive and dynamic. Early Sung Confucian scholars were taught to regard themselves as a ruling elite, and they spoke confidently of reform and sacrifice. In the words of the eleventh-century reformer-statesman Fan Chung-yen, they were the "first in worrying about the world's troubles, and last in enjoying its pleasures."[4]

Despite a rapidly expanding population and increasing prosperity through growth in trade and commerce, the Northern Sung government was militarily weak. It never regained the sixteen prefectures ceded in 936 by a previous regime to the Khitan Liao, its powerful neighbor to the northwest, and in January 1005 was forced to pay the Liao an annual tribute of 100,000 taels of silver and 200,000 bolts of silk. In 1044, after a serious military defeat, a similar agreement was reached with its northwestern neighbor the Tangut (partly Tibetan) state of Hsi-Hsia (see Map 2, p. 42). By the mid-eleventh century, the government was increasingly plagued by insufficient revenue and by corruption and incompetence in local government. Social unrest led to armed uprisings among farmers and unemployed soldiers. As difficulties mounted, a series of court-initiated reforms were attempted, but court politics resulted in violent shifts in policy and leadership. Without an institutional mechanism for reconciling their differences, bickering scholar-officials fell into bitter partisan wrangling. A relentless cycle of persecution and recrimination ensued, ultimately destroying the effectiveness of the Northern Sung government.

In 1068, the young emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85) directed his chief minister, Wang An-shih (1021–1086), to implement a massive campaign of government reform. Wang, described by some modern Chinese historians as China's first socialist, attempted to institutionalize the fiscal management of

the empire by reorganizing the tax system, initiating changes in agriculture, trade, and national defense, and in the education, examination, and civil service systems.[5] Because of his activist policy in imposing regulatory systems, Wang was labeled a Legalist, an epithet traditionally associated with the despotic First Emperor of Ch'in (r. 246–210 B.C.). It was the most comprehensive implementation of social and economic change ever attempted in imperial China, and it stretched the limits of court-initiated reform within the Confucian system of government. Wang's assertive policies, especially his corvée tax, paying tax instead of rendering service, met with violent opposition by the majority of the scholar-official conservatives and those representing entrenched local interests and customs. In the end, most reform measures were rescinded, and though the state's tax revenues improved, social discontent mounted.

But the anti-Wang conservatives, besides advocating the ancient virtues of simplicity in government, moral idealism, and basic human values, had no reform program of their own. Their response to governmental crisis tended to be pedantic and inflexible. Because they tried to deal with problems through rigid moral standards and historical precedent, they resorted to exhortation rather than action. In considering the ills of government and society, they saw their task as the reform of man rather than of institutions. They subscribed to moral education, which, they believed, would lead to the transformation of human society. Earlier, the eminent statesman and historian Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–1072), for example, in his widely read "Essay on Fundamentals," envisioned the perfect social order in a golden age regulated by ritual, a society in which social function would be matched by moral value.[6] Drawing an analogy between an ailing society and a sick man, Ou-yang deduced that a society, like an individual, must be healed through the cultivation of the moral self.

Responding to a crisis in the education system, Ou-yang led a "return to the past" (*fu-ku*) movement, advocating the use of a simpler, less stylized ancient prose (*ku-wen*) style in literary composition. In 1057, as the chief examiner for the *chin-shih* degree, he downgraded the ornate late T'ang parallel prose (rhymed prose in couplets) in favor of a plain, ancient prose, placing emphasis on content rather than on style.

The same year, the most accomplished *chin-shih* candidate was Ou-yang's protégé Su Shih (1037–1101). A brilliant essayist, Su Shih, in his analysis of contemporary problems through historical analogy, combined Confucian morality with Confucian pragmatism. While his eloquence made him an instant celebrity at court, and though he often disagreed with many conservative policies, Su's intellectual and emotional affinity with the conservatives brought him into inevitable conflict with the advocates of reform headed by Wang An-shih. As a consequence, he suffered a fate shared by many high officials, that of repeated exile. Banished in 1079 to Huang-chou, a backwater in southeastern Hupei, he was recalled to the capital in 1085, after the death of Emperor Shen-tsung, when the conservatives returned briefly to power. Exiled again in 1097 to the remote southernmost island of Hainan, he died in 1101, soon after receiving a pardon from the new emperor, Hui-tsung.

Throughout the eleventh century, scholars heatedly debated the relationship between *wen*, or literary and artistic culture, and the Tao, the Great Way in general and Confucian teachings in particular. The Neo-Confucian philosopher Chou Tun-i (1017–1073) reiterated the T'ang scholar Han Yü's belief that art must convey or serve the Tao. Pure art, art for art's sake—"the painting of small branches and leaves"—was considered elegant dissipation and therefore morally wrong; the only justification for art was a didactic one, the illumination of the Tao, an activity represented by the moral and historical illustrations of the professional artisans.[7] For Su Shih, however, art was deemed significant precisely because, in embodying the Tao, it was itself valid as a way of life and thus worthy of being embraced by the scholar. For Su, art—perceived not so much as a vehicle for the artist as something that chooses him as its vehicle—was a means of achieving the power of Tao. For it was through the creation of the self that the artist captured the Tao and through the expression of the Tao that the self was created. Su Shih's interest in Taoist philosophy and Ch'an Buddhism led him to celebrate naturalness and spontaneity in art. "Tao can be made to come, but cannot be sought," he wrote. "My writing swells up like ten thousand gallons of water at the wellhead, erupting through the ground, spilling over the flat valley, and running unchecked for thousands of *li* a day."[8]

It was thus the threat of a faction-ridden society, which forced the scholars to withdraw from political engagement, that gave birth to the scholar-official tradition in art. For in retreat, the scholar-official shifted his energies from the realm of public affairs to the cultivation of the moral self, from political reform to artistic sublimation. During his Huang-chou years, Su Shih was visited frequently by friends and followers, including many Buddhists and Taoists, with whom he exchanged poems and works of art and who then made known his works among scholar-officials throughout the empire. Su Shih in exile became the undisputed leader of the cultured world of the late Northern Sung.

Calligraphy as Paradigm

Calligraphy for the scholar-artist was an art of paradigm, perceived as a means of partaking of the ever-dynamic field of nature's creativity. The physical act of applying brush to paper led the Chinese artist to characterize calligraphy's function in cosmogonic terms. The blank paper surface represents the universe, which in the beginning existed in undifferentiated oneness; the first stroke, born of the union of brush and ink, establishes on paper the primary relationship between yin and yang; and each new stroke, combining with the old, creates new yin-yang relationships, until the whole is reconciled and again united into the harmonious oneness that is the Tao of the universe. With the edge of the brush (keeping the tip to one side), the artist makes a "square" brushstroke; with the center of the brush (containing the tip within), he makes a "round" brushstroke. While the tip of a brush makes fine lines, a brush saturated with ink makes broad ink washes. Brush and ink, in their infinite line-and-surface, bone-and-flesh, hard-and-soft, and dry-and-wet com-

binations, can theoretically represent or signal everything in the universe. In practicing calligraphy, the artist is both a participant and an observer, discovering in the process technical principles of brushwork and composition and, by responding to earlier styles, reaching an understanding of such concepts as imitation and creativity, orthodoxy and individuality, revival and synthesis.

Concerned with both the immediate present and a long past, calligraphy is at once the most rigorously disciplined and the most fiercely individualistic of the arts. Every calligrapher begins by emulating ancient styles. Since to emulate is to perform a physical act generated from within, the wise student learns not to be a slavish imitator but to seek self-realization. Learning calligraphy thus has less to do with what one studies than with the development of one's inner resources. Although fine calligraphers abound in history, stylistic innovators are comparatively rare. In the second half of the eleventh century, late Northern Sung China saw the ascendancy of several bold innovators, calligraphers whose highly individual styles changed the history of Chinese art.

Ancient Chinese script evolved slowly over a period of more than two millennia before arriving at a modern, "regular" script in the third century A.D.: from the "seal" (*chuan*) script of the Shang, Chou, and Ch'in periods (ca. 1500–206 B.C.) through the "clerical" (*li*) script of the Han period (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) to the "regular" (*cheng* or *k'ai*), "running" (*hsing*), and "cursive," or "grass" (*ts'ao*), forms of the Wei, Tsin, and Six Dynasties periods (A.D. 220–618). Starting with the curvilinear, picturelike form of the archaic seal style (figs. 40, 41), executed in strokes of even thickness and done with a stylus or a brush, the written character moved first toward the standardized, squared-off Han clerical script (fig. 42), whose horizontal and vertical strokes cross each other at right angles and whose uniform characters are aligned on a grid pattern in columns reading from top to bottom and right to left. In the next stage, slanting and undulating brushstrokes of varying thicknesses developed, reflecting the flexible movements of the brush, which replaced the stylus as the standard writing implement in the later clerical script. In the regular and running scripts (figs. 43, 44), the written character was transformed into a balanced composition of subtly interacting brush forces (*pi-shih*).

The first master of the early regular script was Chung Yu (151–230), chief minister to the Wei emperor Wen-ti (r. 220–26). An early Northern Sung study of Chung Yu is found in the imperial anthology of 992, *Calligraphic Works in the Ch'un-hua Palace*, in which copies of six works attributed to Chung are reproduced.[9] The copies are believed to be by two leading fourth-century calligraphers, Wang Hsi-chih and his son Wang Hsien-chih. The most important of these is the *Memorial on an Announcement to Sun Ch'üan* (fig. 43), the original datable to 221, said to be a freehand copy by Wang Hsi-chih. Another important work, the *Memorial Celebrating a Victory* (fig. 45), the original dated 219, made in the T'ang period (618–906) and presumed to be an exact tracing copy of a work by Chung, is described in the late Northern Sung *Catalogue of the Imperial Calligraphy Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era*, dating to about 1120, as the "ancestor" of regular script.[10]

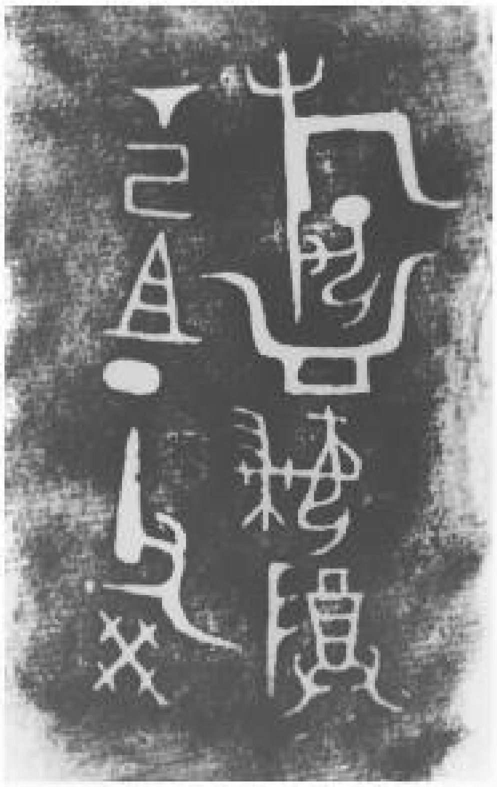


Fig. 40. Seal script. Detail from a rubbing of a bronze ritual vessel, Shang dynasty, ca. 11th century B.C. Formerly David Weill Collection, Paris



Fig. 41. Seal script. Detail from a rubbing of *Stone Drums*, Eastern Chou dynasty, ca. 422 B.C.



Fig. 42. Clerical script. Detail from a rubbing of the stele *Commemorating the Temple of the Western Peak, Mount Hua*, Eastern Han dynasty, dated A.D. 165. Shodō Hakubutsukan, Tokyo

But it was the fourth-century "calligraphic sage" Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361), considered the greatest master in both the regular and the running scripts, whose writing became the leading model for calligraphers of the T'ang period. *Sung Rubbings of T'ang Engravings of Eight Kinds of Tsin and T'ang Small Regular Script Writings* (pls. 16a, b), an early Northern Sung album of rubbings of eight calligraphic classics from the Eastern Tsin (317–420) and T'ang periods, bears the palace seals, dated 1034, of the Hsi-Hsia kingdom in northwestern China.[11] Judging from the worn state of the stone surfaces, the engravings from which these rubbings were made probably date from the T'ang period. The album begins with the *Essay on General Yüeh I*, dated 348 (pl. 16a), which is regarded as the most reliable example of Wang Hsi-chih's small regular script. Its well-formed square characters, with carefully articulated brushwork and balanced composition, represent the prototype of the T'ang style of small regular-script writing.

In the same album is the legendary *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* (pl. 16b and fig. 46a), the most well known running script work attributed to Wang Hsi-chih. The circumstances surrounding the writing of the *Preface* occurred on the third day of the third lunar month of the year 353. Wang Hsi-chih and his friends, with Wang's nine-year-old son, Hsien-chih, tagging along, had gathered at the Orchid Pavilion in Kuei-chi, Chekiang Province, to celebrate the springtime rite of purification. The weather that day was fine and the scenery unsurpassed. Sitting alongside a stream, the friends held a poetry

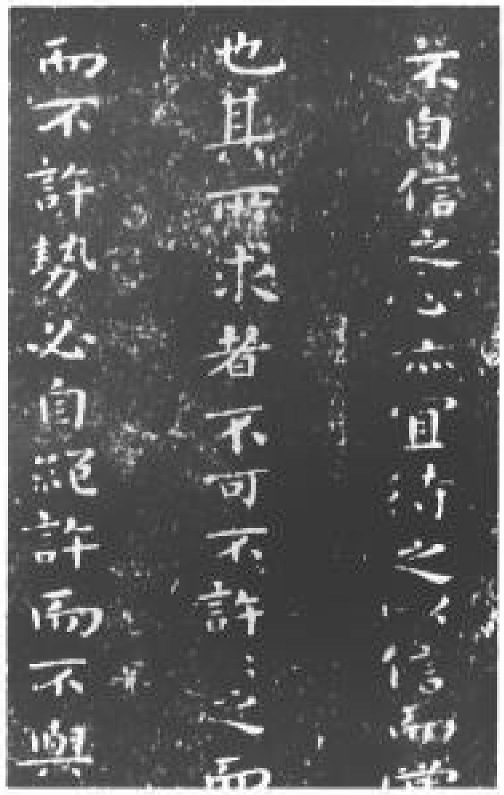


Fig. 43. Regular script, after Chung Yu (151–230), copy attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). *Memorial on an Announcement to Sun Ch'üan*, dated 221. Detail from a rubbing from the anthology *Ch'un-hua Palace*. Neiraku Bijitsukan, Nara



Fig. 44. Running script, attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from the *Ting-wu* rubbing of *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*, dated 353

contest, drinking freely as cups of wine placed on leaves floated downstream; additional cups were drunk in forfeit by those who did not finish their poems within the allotted time. When the contest was over, Wang Hsi-chih composed a preface for the poems that had been written. Dashing off the 324-word essay in twenty-eight columns in a burst of inspiration, Wang produced one of the most brilliant pieces of calligraphy ever created.

The documented history of the *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* manuscript begins in the time of the early T'ang emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 626–49), a devoted student of Wang Hsi-chih and the compiler of a comprehensive collection of Wang's surviving works. In 636, upon acquiring the reputedly original "ink trace" (*mo-chi*) of the treasured manuscript, the emperor had ten tracing copies made by four of his leading court calligraphers. The tracing copies were, in turn, engraved in stone, and from them hundreds of rubbings were made and disseminated throughout the empire. The most famous of the copies is the *Ting-wu* version (figs. 44, 46b), reportedly made by the renowned calligrapher Ou-yang Hsün (557–641).

Although some modern scholars suspect that the T'ang emperor's prized manuscript of the *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* was a clever ancient forgery,[12] it no doubt represents the best of the Wang Hsi-chih tradition of running script writing in the early seventh century. Moreover, all the surviving T'ang copies of this work more accurately reflect the elegant, fully developed T'ang taste than the simple, archaic style of the original

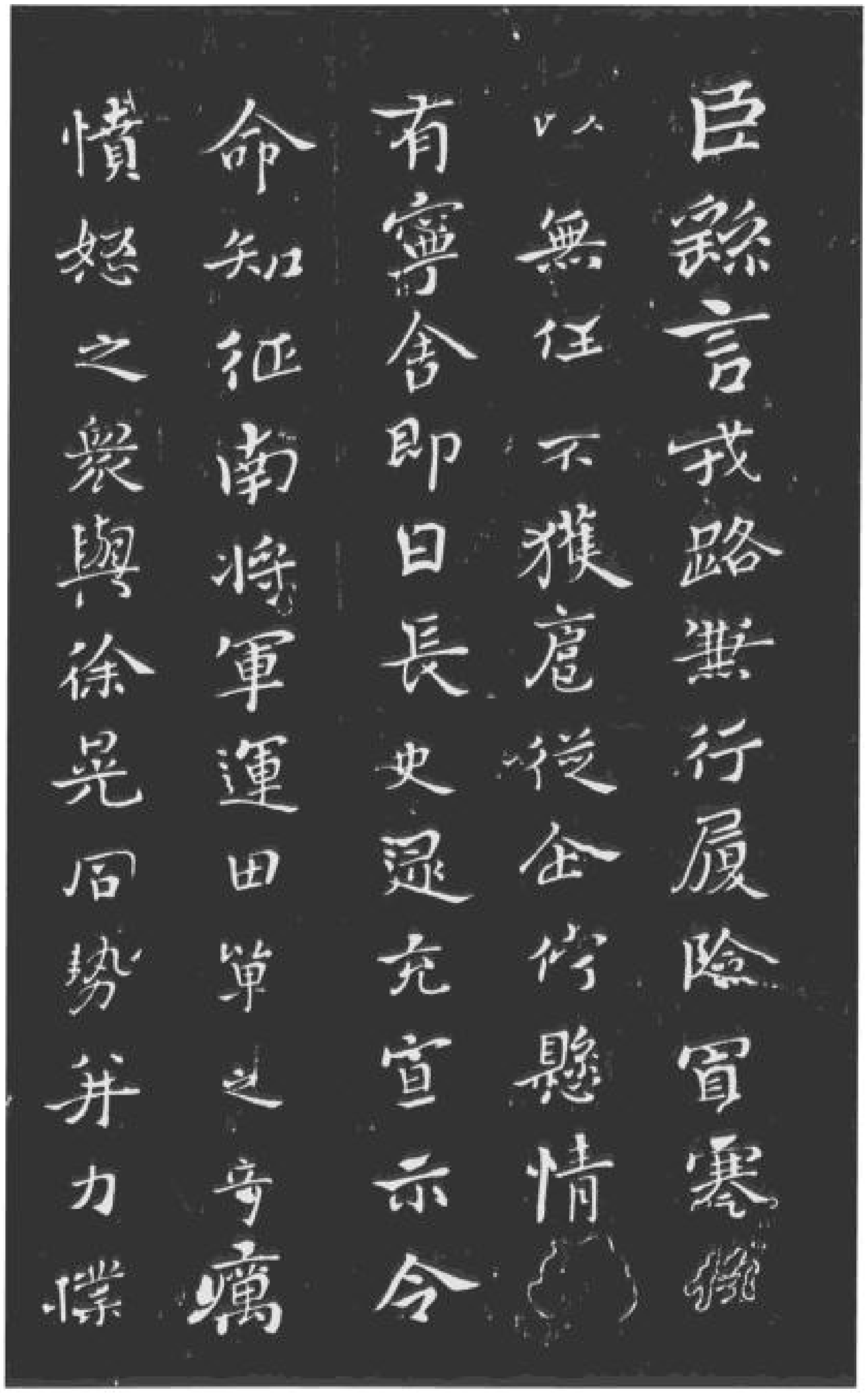


Fig. 45. Attributed to Chung Yu (151–230). *Memorial Celebrating a Victory*, dated 219. Detail from a rubbing mounted as an album, each leaf 9⅝ x 10¾ in. (24.6 x 27.2 cm). Shodō Hakubutsukan, Tokyo

fourth-century master calligrapher. Indeed, it was its very T'ang characteristic of intricate brushwork and sophisticated composition that made the work an ideal model for T'ang and later calligraphers who continued to follow, and develop, the orthodox Wang tradition.

The Taoist text *Spiritual Flight Sutra* (pl. 17), attributed to the early eighth-century calligrapher Chung Shao-ching (active ca. 713–41) and



Pl. 16a. Attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from *Essay on General Yüeh I* (*Yüeh I lun*). From *Sung Rubbings of T'ang Engravings of Eight Kinds of Tsin and T'ang Small Regular Script Writings*, bearing an imperial seal of the Hsi-Hsia datable to 1034. Album of 45 leaves, ink on paper, maximum size 9⅞ x 3¹³⁄₁₆ in. (23.8 x 9.6 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.2)









Fig. 46a. Detail, pl. 16b

Fig. 46b. Detail, fig. 44

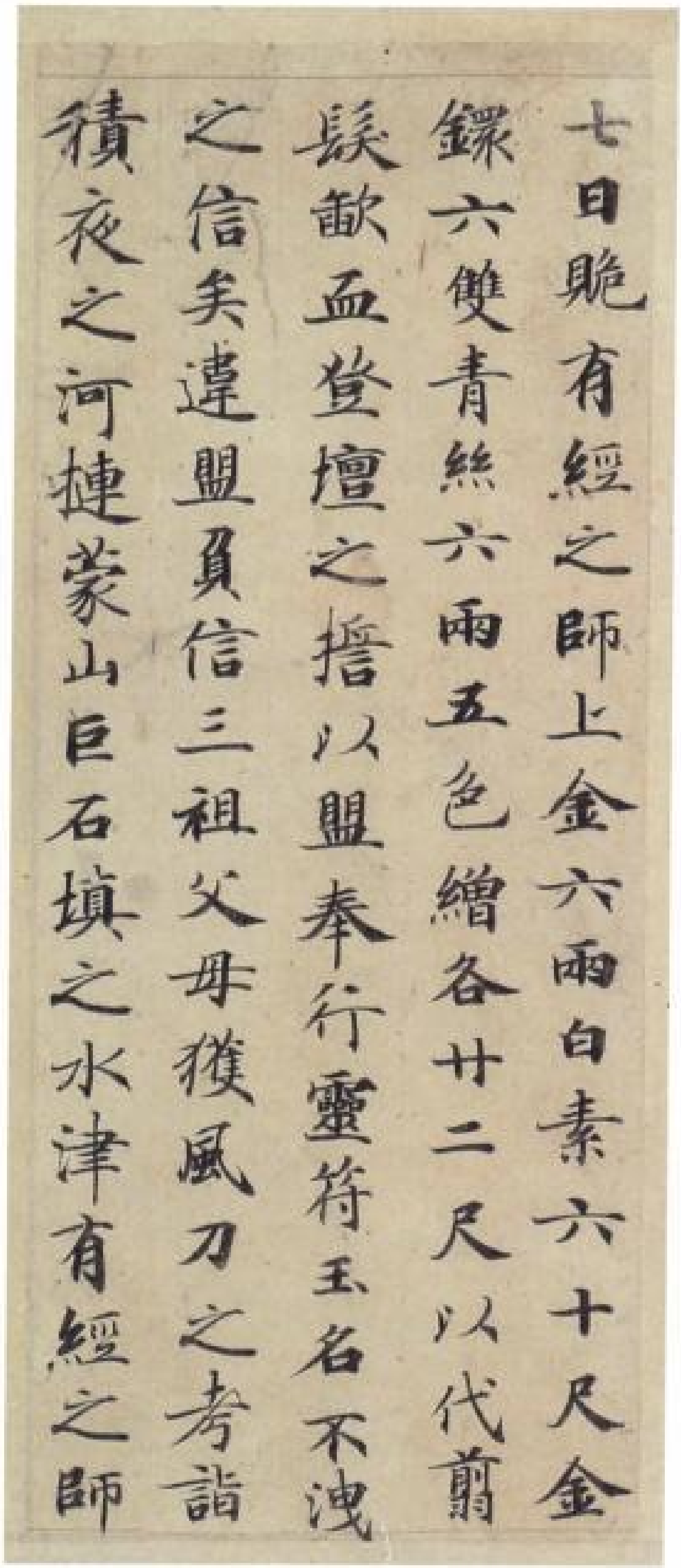
commissioned in 738 by the princess Yü-chen, a daughter of the emperor Hsüan-tsung,[13] exemplifies the highly sophisticated court style of the High T'ang period. The small-size regular script (each character is about a half inch high; pl. 17a) is balanced and harmonious, with every stroke, hook, and dot perfectly defined and executed. Applied with a stiff, long-pointed brush, each stroke shows clean, crisp movements, with graceful, saber-sharp turns. Individual characters are straight and upright, firmly built and with a rectangular frame of supports and walls. The construction of the characters reveals an analytical process, whereby different types of brushstrokes are seen as "forces" (*shih*) of a dynamic composition, each having a perfect form and "method" (*fa*) of interacting with another stroke, and each character, with its elegant, carefully considered deployment of these forces, exemplifying a model of physical equilibrium and spiritual repose.

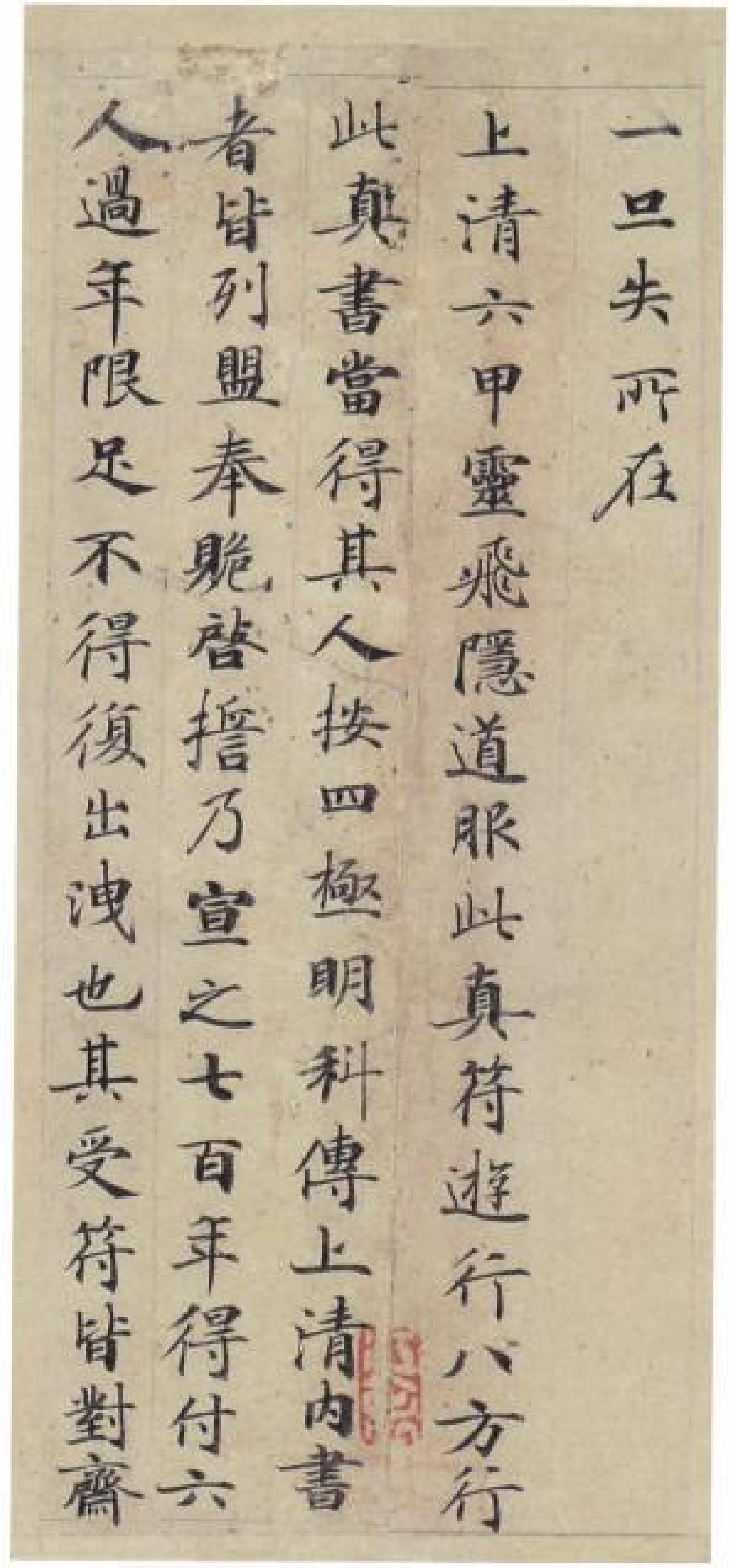
Thus, from after the fall of the Han dynasty in the early third century through the late T'ang in the early tenth century, the history of calligraphy saw the completion of a full cycle of development—from the simple, archaic proto-regular script of Chung Yu to a complex and sophisticated "modern" court style.[14]

The principal models for early Northern Sung calligraphers were Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361; fig. 44 and pl. 16a), who continued to be regarded as the prototypical calligrapher, and the eighth-century master Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785; fig. 47), whose art represented the culmination of the orthodox Wang Hsi-chih tradition of the High T'ang period. While members of the aristocracy and high court officials collected great original works of art as China's cultural patrimony, ordinary students of calligraphy had access only to rubbings of stone engravings or woodblocks of famous masterworks. During the early Northern Sung dynasty, the study of fine calligraphy was encouraged by court sponsorship. In 992, Emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97) commissioned an anthology of rubbings, *Calligraphic Works in the Ch'un-hua Palace*, to be selected from calligraphies in the imperial collection and printed in ten *chüan*, or volumes, five of which were to be devoted to works attributed to the two Wangs, Wang Hsi-chih and his son Wang Hsien-chih (344–388). Compiled by the court calligrapher Wang Chu (active ca. 990), whose connoisseurship was less than exemplary, the rubbings made from the numerous recuttings of the original carvings of 992 achieved wide circulation but were responsible for a general lowering rather than heightening of artistic standards.

Pl. 16b. Attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*. From *Sung Rubbings of T'ang Engravings of Eight Kinds of Tsin and T'ang Small Regular Script Writings*, bearing an imperial seal of the Hsi-Hsia datable to 1034. Album of 45 leaves, ink on paper, maximum size $9\frac{7}{8}$ x $3\frac{13}{16}$ in. (23.8 x 9.6 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.2)

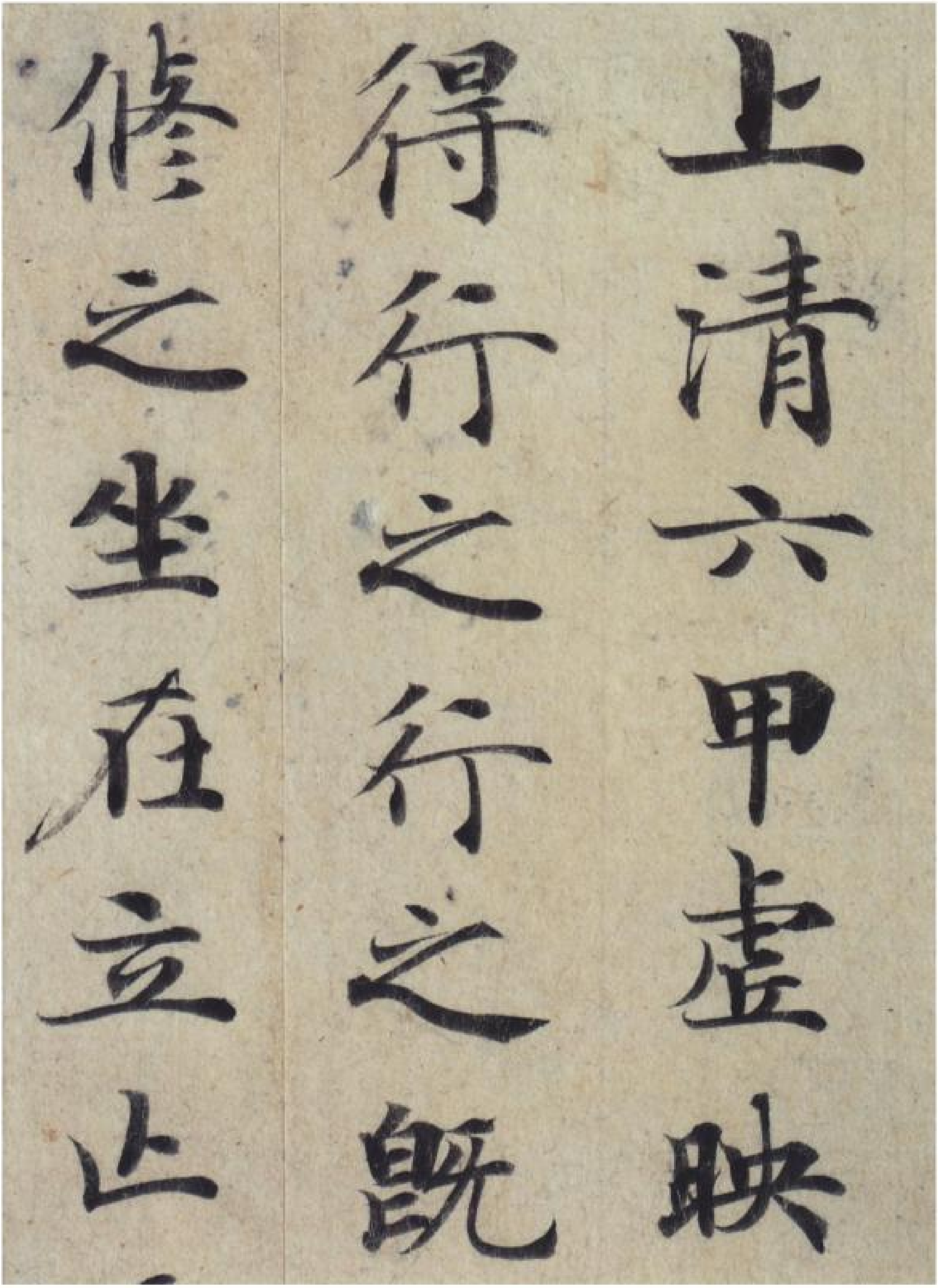
By the late Northern Sung period, there was a general belief that the endless repetition, via rubbing reproductions, of the T'ang models had evolved into a style that was increasingly dull and mechanical. After noting that all forms of artistic endeavor had reached their zenith in the eighth-century High T'ang period and declined thereafter, Su Shih, for example, lamented that "nowadays every calligrapher tries to follow Yen Chen-ch'ing [709–785] and Liu Kung-ch'üan [778–865]; the ancient brush methods of Chung Yu [151–230] and Wang Hsi-chih are in inexorable decline." The archaic styles of





Pl. 17. Attributed to Chung Shao-ching (active ca. 713–41). *Spiritual Flight Sutra*, ca. 738. Detail. Album of nine leaves, ink on paper, each leaf 8³⁄₁₆ x 3½ in. (20.8 x 8.9 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.1)

Pl. 17a. Detail from *Spiritual Flight Sutra*


上清六甲虛映
得行之行之既
脩之坐在立止

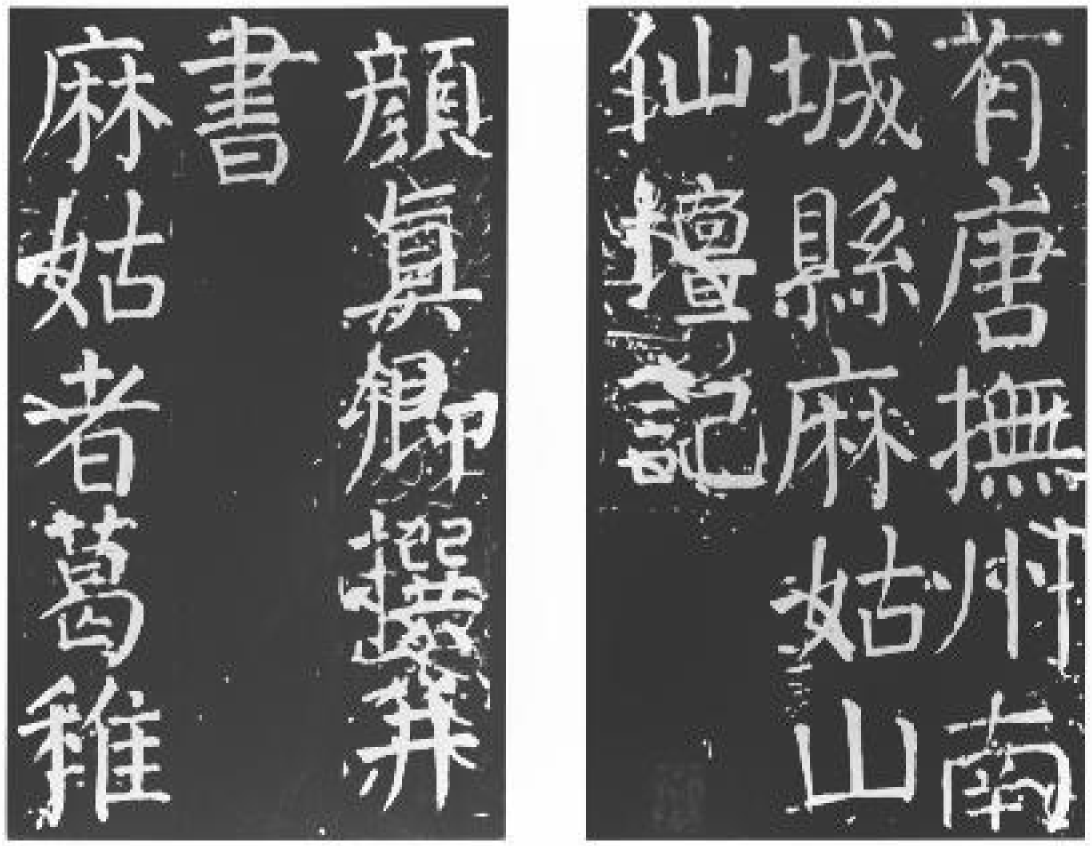


Fig. 47. Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785). Detail from a rubbing of the stele *Record of the Altar of the Goddess Ma-ku*, dated 771

Chung and Wang, unlike those of Yen and Liu, were, according to Su Shih, "relaxed, easy, and simple."[15]

There was, during this time of political and cultural ferment, an inseparable kinship between political idealism and moral self-cultivation as reflected in literary and artistic expression. Motivated by the same reformist zeal that incited Ou-yang Hsiu to write about a moral utopia, and echoing Ou-yang's campaign for the ancient-prose style in literary composition, late Northern Sung scholar-artists tried to rejuvenate calligraphy by returning to a less ornate, more archaic model. As an alternative to the orthodox Wang Hsi-chih model favored by the T'ang and early Northern Sung calligraphers, they looked back even further in history, to Wang's progenitor Chung Yu.

The Recluse

A radically different style is seen in the calligraphy of Li Kung-lin. In his transcription of the text of the *Classic of Filial Piety,* which accompanies his illustrations (pl. 8b), Li created a new, personal idiom in the archaic mode of Chung Yu.[16] A descendant of the tenth-century Southern T'ang royal family and thus a wealthy landowner and able to pursue the life of a scholar, Li, after earning his *chin-shih* degree in 1070, took the unusual step of retreating to the Lung-mien (Sleeping Dragon) Mountains, southwest of his native city of Shu-ch'eng, in southern Anhwei Province. There, calling himself the Hermit of Lung-mien, he began to develop his family property—following in the tradition of the Wang-ch'uan Villa of the T'ang poet Wang Wei (699?–761?)—

a rambling landscape of twenty scenic sites that he called the Lung-mien Mountain Villa.[17]

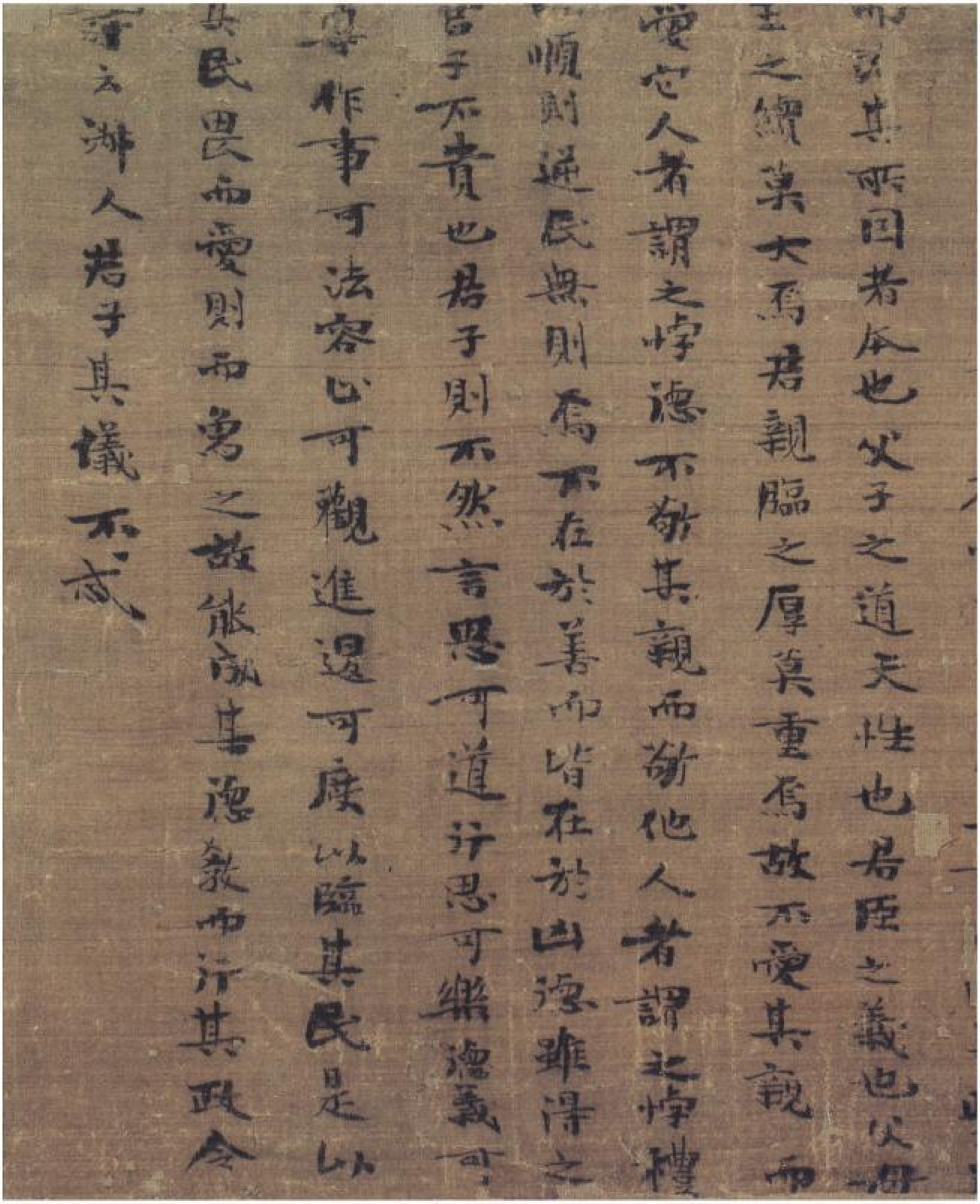
One of Li's lost works is an illustration of *Returning Home*, by the fourth-century recluse poet T'ao Ch'ien (365–427), preserved in an early twelfth-century copy (fig. 48).[18] In the last quarter of the eleventh century, with heightened factionalism at court and increasing conflict between following a political career and fulfilling a moral life, there developed among the scholar-official class a fascination with T'ao, who, having quit the tedious existence of a frustrated bureaucrat, composed the immortal rhapsody:

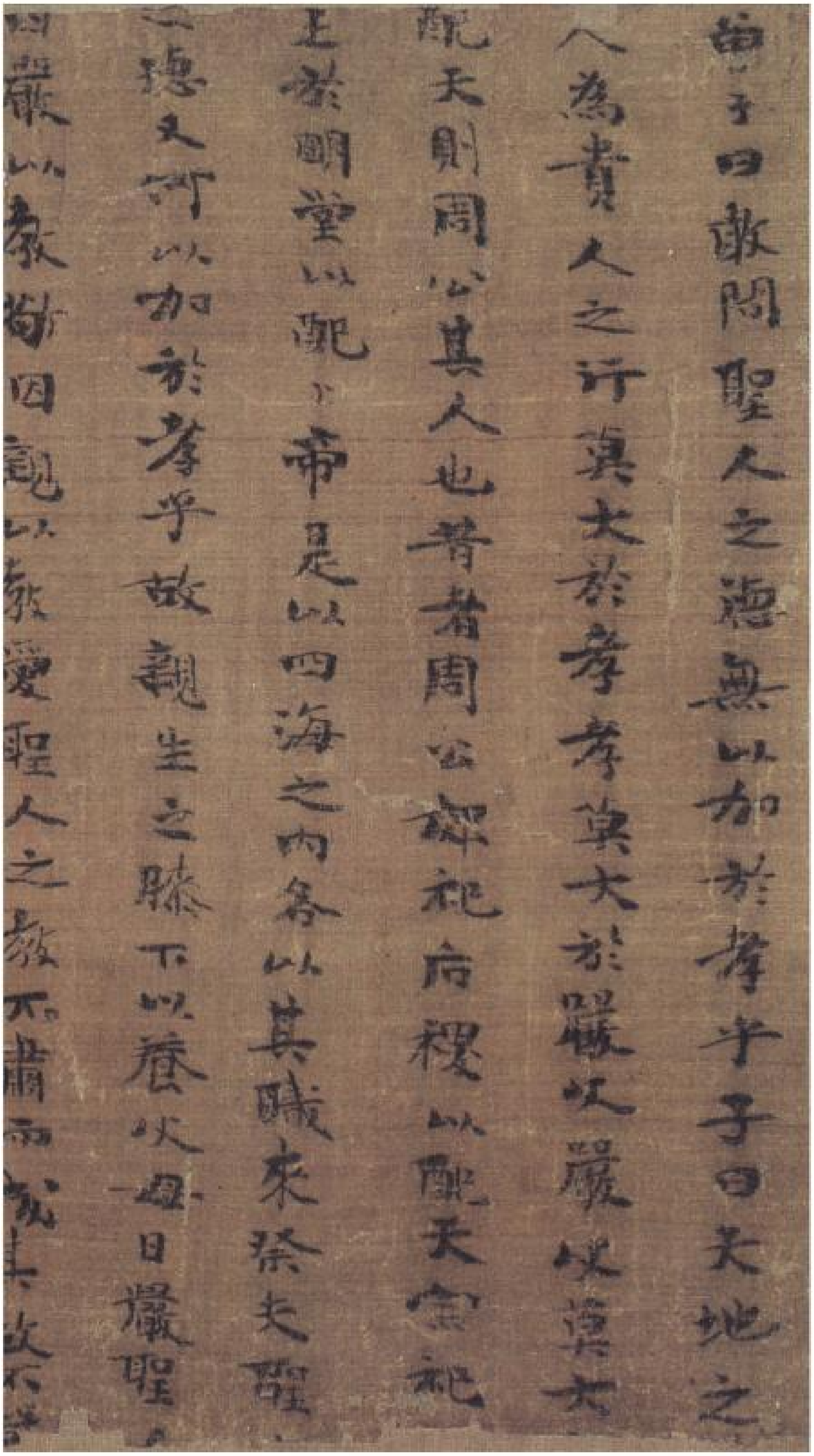
> To leave all this and return home! . . .
>
> As it is my own doing that makes my mind my body's slave,
> Why should I continue in melancholy and lonely grief?
>
> Daily I stroll contentedly in my garden,
> There is a gate, but it is always shut. . . .
>
> The clouds rise aimlessly from the mountain peaks,
> The birds, when weary of flying, know it is time to return. . . .
>
> Here I enjoy honest conversation with my family,
> And take pleasure in my books and zither to dispel my worries. . . .
>
> Climb the eastern banks and whistle long and high,
> Or sit by the clear stream and compose a poem,
> So, in accord with nature's cycle, may I return to extinction
> Rejoicing in Heaven's command.[19]

In T'ao Ch'ien, whose retreat from society served Heaven's command rather than that of the emperor, Li Kung-lin saw a model he wished to emulate, and in his way of life, the path he wished to follow.



Fig. 48. After Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *T'ao Ch'ien Returning Home*, 12th century. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 14 9/16 x 204 3/16 in. (37 x 518.5 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (19.119)


其所因者本也父子之道天性也君臣之義也父母
生之續莫大焉君親臨之厚莫重焉故不愛其親而
愛他人者謂之悖德不敬其親而敬他人者謂之悖禮
以順則逆民無則焉不在於善而皆在於凶德雖得之
君子不貴也君子則不然言思可道行思可樂德義可
尊作事可法容止可觀進退可度以臨其民是以
其民畏而愛之則而象之故能成其德教而行其政令
詩云淑人君子其儀不忒



Pl. 8f. *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail from Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule" (see also pl. 8b, pp. 52–53)

Overleaf
Pl. 8g. *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail from Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule" (pl. 8f)

嚴以教敬因親以教
其所因者本也父子
之續莫大焉君親臨

天則周公其人也昔者

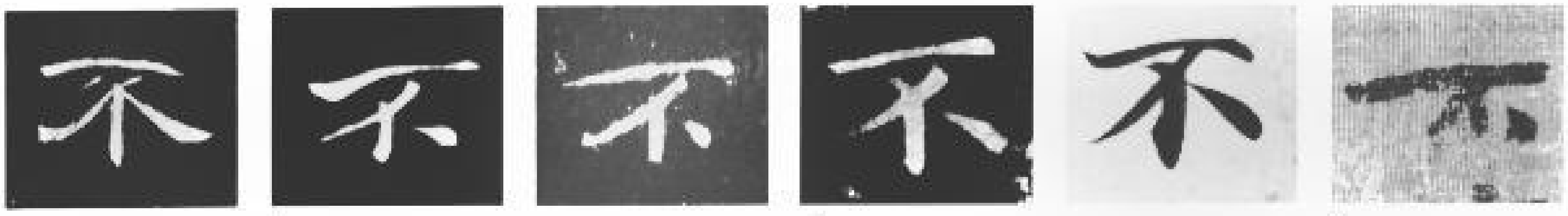
於明堂以配上帝是以

德又何以加於孝乎故

As a recluse calligrapher, Li purposely cultivated a rustic, primitive style, with simplified brushwork and loose, open forms (pl. 8f). In contrast to Chung Shao-ching's polished brushwork and elegant, balanced composition (pl. 17a), Li's blunt brushwork and unbalanced configuration aptly reflect the casual, unfettered nature of a reclusive scholar who "never for one moment forgot the mountains and the forests."[20]

If we take as a sample the character *pu* (figs. 49a–f), we can clearly trace the evolution from the second-century Han archaic clerical writing through Chung Yu, Wang Hsi-chih, and the T'ang court style to Li Kung-lin's late Northern Sung rustic revival of the primitive Chung Yu mode. The Han clerical script (fig. 42), which is rooted in the archaic tradition of monumental inscriptions designed with a stylus, shows evenly controlled round brushwork and squat characters in a balanced, architectonic configuration that are uniform in size and set in a grid pattern; in the clerical *pu* (fig. 49a), a perfect *T* establishes the main frame, while the two oarlike diagonal strokes, balancing to the left and to the right with flaring, brushed terminals, give the character a graceful upward tug. In Chung Yu's *Memorial Celebrating a Victory* (fig. 45), written in the epistolary style, the controlled, balanced clerical structure gives way to the freely interacting brushstrokes and compositions of regular script. In Chung's hand, the individual characters are irregularly shaped, unbalanced, and varying in size, with lopsided radicals and diagonals that stretch and contract. Chung's *pu* (fig. 49b) projects the lateral force of the character, stretching the horizontal stroke and compressing the vertical element, and creating a springlike tension within the form by pulling apart the upper and lower parts of the character. In Wang Hsi-chih's copy of Chung's work (fig. 43), both the brushwork and the compositional imbalance are moderated. Wang's copy of Chung's *pu* (fig. 49c) retains Chung's form, but with a subtly restrained brushwork. Wang's own *pu* (fig. 49d), representing the developed regular script, shows interacting brushstrokes within a dynamically balanced structure. In Chung Shao-ching's eighth-century *pu* (fig. 49e), which is modeled after Wang's, the complex brushwork attains its ultimate purpose. Individual brushstrokes, each in a prescribed form playing an assigned role, act and respond to one another to build an edifice that is elegant and harmonious. Four beautifully defined strokes graciously follow and interact with one another to render the character. First a horizontal stroke at the top arches subtly from left to right, then a saberlike thrust to the lower left is followed by a solidly planted countervailing vertical, and finally the character is completed by a long, graceful mark that pulls into the lower right corner. Rather than a static, two-dimensional design, the elegantly brushed character, embellished with a lustrous ink surface, resembles a living sculpture breathing freely in space.

Finally in Li's *pu* (fig. 49f)—the character coincidentally denotes negation, defiance, and disapproval—the blunt immediacy of the brushwork dramatically repudiates Chung Shao-ching's refined movements in the orthodox Wang Hsi-chih tradition, returning to the "relaxed, simple, and easy" model of Chung Yu. The artlessness of Li's calligraphy invites an emotional response. As



Figs. 49a–f. The character *pu*

a. Detail from a rubbing of the *Ts'ao Ch'üan* stele, dated 185

b. Attributed to Chung Yu (151–230). Detail from *Memorial Celebrating a Victory* (fig. 45)

c. Attributed to Chung Yu (151–230). Detail from *Memorial on an Announcement to Sun Ch'üan* (fig. 43)

d. Attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from *Essay on General Yüeh I* (pl. 16a)

e. Attributed to Chung Shao-ching (active ca. 713–41). Detail from *Spiritual Flight Sutra* (pl. 17)

f. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). Detail from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g)

a psychological diagram, the character is an expression of the calligrapher's inner being. Broad and open, but strongly unconventional, it is marked by a stubborn quality that reflects the character of an individual unfit for an active and social life at court. In Li's calligraphy we see, in short, a poignant self-portrait.

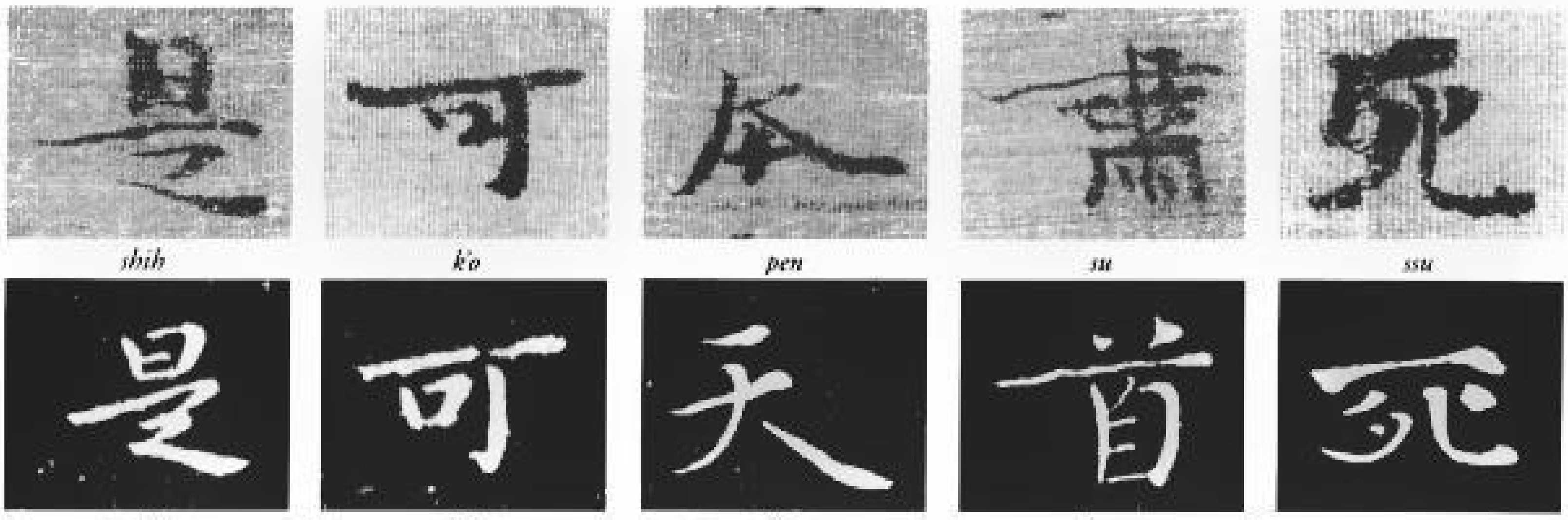
The calligraphy is characterized by a historical approach that is both radical and reductionist. During the second half of the eleventh century, there was a developing interest in archaeology and in the collecting of antique objects. Conservative reformers, espousing a return to the past, saw themselves as the custodians of an ancient cultural heritage. Ou-yang Hsiu, in 1061, completed one of the earliest works on epigraphy, the *Collection of Ancient Inscriptions.* Liu Chang (1019–1068), an early connoisseur of archaic ritual bronze vessels, published the first illustrated collection catalogue, entitled *A Record of Ancient Vessels from the Ch'in Dynasty* (221–206 B.C.), which reproduced engraved drawings of the vessels and rubbings of their inscriptions.[21] Li Kung-lin, inheriting his love of art from his father, who had collected early masterworks of painting and calligraphy, expanded his own selection to include ancient objects. Having assembled a large collection of archaic ritual bronzes, jades, and inscriptions in archaic scripts, Li himself compiled a catalogue, *Illustrated Archaeology,* which became the model of the imperial-sponsored *Illustrated Catalogue of Antiquities in the Hsüan-ho Palace* (fig. 50).[22]

Fig. 50. *Illustrated Catalogue of Antiquities in the Hsüan-ho Palace*, preface dated 1120. Detail, *ting* ritual bronze vessel



Thus, Li's calligraphy is inextricably bound both to the historical study of art and archaeology and to the collecting of antiquities. Returning to the third-century model of Chung Yu, he began by copying rubbings and committing their forms to memory (figs. 51a, b). Certain characters in Li's transcription of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (fig. 51a) resurrect the rubbing forms (fig. 51b), bringing Chung's vividly to life. He also made a close study of historical sources, carefully examining not only archaic scripts in metal and stone carvings but also Han writings on bamboo and wood slips (fig. 52). Having a grasp of the art-historical evolution of the written character, from the Han clerical to Chung Yu's proto-regular script, he then re-created Chung Yu's style, forming his own personal archaizing idiom.

Li discovered a new approach to brushwork through the study of the "metal and stone" scripts (*chin-shih-hsüeh*), imitating the cast or chiseled effect of monumental bronze or stone inscriptions. Regular and running scripts, used for free epistolary writing, are expressive of a soft, agile brush, making intricate "flicking and kicking" (*t'iao-t'i*) movements (figs. 43 and 44, and pl. 17a). Archaic metal and stone (or seal and clerical) scripts, on the other hand, used in



Figs. 51a, b. The calligraphy of Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106) and Chung Yu (151–230)

a. Li Kung-lin. The characters *shih*, *k'o*, *pen*, *su*, and *ssu*, details from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g)

b. After Chung Yu. The characters *shih* and *k'o*, details from *Memorial on an Announcement to Sun Ch'üan* (fig. 43); the characters *t'ien*, *shou*, and *ssu*, details from *Memorial Celebrating a Victory*

monumental bronze or stone inscriptions and cast or carved directly into the metal or the stone, are usually executed in a simplified round or square pattern (figs. 40, 42, 43). In the inscription on the late Eastern Chou *Stone Drums* dating to about 422 B.C. (fig. 41), a celebrated monument of ancient epigraphy discovered in the T'ang period, for example, individual characters are made of round, curvilinear strokes of even thickness that are bent like "iron wires." And in a Buddhist stone inscription dated 498, at Ku-yang Cave in Lung-men, Honan Province (fig. 53), the characters, set in a grid pattern, display a hard-edged square or angular brushwork.

In simplifying his brushwork, Li eliminates the small "flicking and kicking" movements of the T'ang style (pl. 17a), returning to the two basic approaches, round and square. Using Han, Wei, and Northern Wei models, he experiments with various brush techniques—round, triangular or square, hooked, trembling, and flaring—freely mixing monumental knife-cut effects with freehand, brushed effects and using both the curve and the square for cor-

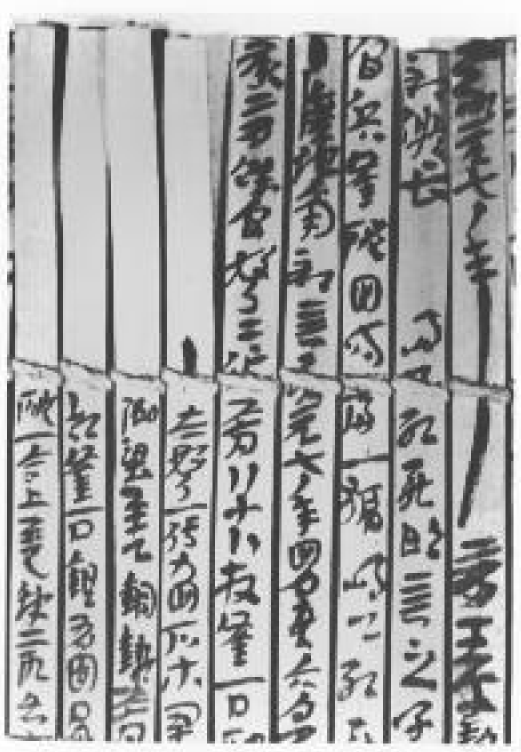


Fig. 52. Writing slips, Han dynasty, 206 B.C.–A.D. 220. Bamboo. Academia Sinica, Taipei



Fig. 53. Rubbing of the stele *Record of a Statue Donated by Shih P'ing-kung*, dated 498, from the Ku-yang Cave, Lung-men, Honan Province. Detail. Album, each leaf 13¼ x 6⅜ in. (33.8 x 16.3 cm). Shodō Hakubutsukan, Tokyo

a

huo *fa* *kuan* *ta* *chih*

b

tz'u *fa* *kuan* *t'ien* *ch'i*

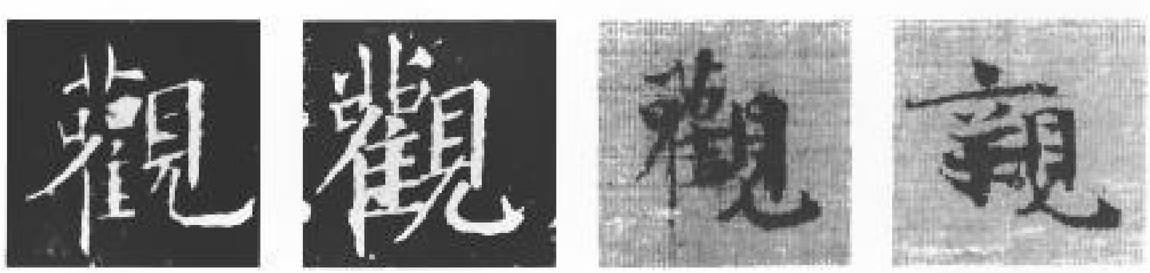
Fig. 54a. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). The characters *huo*, *fa*, *kuan*, *ta*, and *chih*, details from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g)

Fig. 54b. Characters from antique sources: *tz'u*, detail from a rubbing of the *I Ying* stele, dated 153; *fa*, detail from a rubbing of the *Wei Ling-tsang Hsüeh Fa-shao tsao-hsiang chi* stele, dated 500–503; *kuan*, detail from the *K'ung-miao li-ch'i stele*; *t'ien*, detail from the *Chang Ch'ien* stele, dated 186; *ch'i*, detail from *Memorial Celebrating a Victory*, dated 219 (fig. 45)

ner constructions (figs. 54a, b). Working within the squat formation of the clerical script, he sets off extended horizontals and diagonals against compressed vertical elements to form loose, open structures with new, idiosyncratic patterns and contrasts, frequently pushing parts of the character off-balance to create a sense of the unexpected.

In the character *kuan* (figs. 55a–c), for example, which is made of two elements placed side by side, the T'ang masters are concerned with individual brushstrokes and the building of an ideal form, while Li draws the character freely, in a seemingly careless manner. The early seventh-century master Ou-yang Hsün (557–641; fig. 55a), treating his carefully articulated brushstrokes as mutually interacting forces, builds the two halves of the characters as additive components; while they successfully balance each other, they remain separate and independent. In the second half of the eighth century, Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 55b) effectively integrates the two halves of the *kuan* into a single design by having them fit into and respond to each other; the round brushstrokes suggest a continuous flow of energy throughout the form, giving the composition a single structural purpose. But in Li Kung-lin's *kuan* and *ch'in* (figs. 55c, d), the more loosely organized components create playfully idiosyncratic patterns. In rejecting both intricate brushwork and the idea of building a beautiful character, he draws or "paints" his calligraphy for purely expressive purposes.

Many centuries later, Li's work came under close scrutiny and Li himself was suspected of involvement in a scandal. Throughout the Yüan and Ming


a b c d

Figs. 55a–d. The characters *kuan* (a, b, c) and *ch'in* (d)

a. Ou-yang Hsün (557–641). Detail from a rubbing of the stele *Inscription for the Sweet Spring at the Palace of Nine Accomplishments*, dated 632. Shodō Hakubutsukan, Tokyo

b. Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785). Detail from *Record of the Altar of the Goddess Ma-ku*

c. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). Detail from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g)

d. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). Detail from *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g)

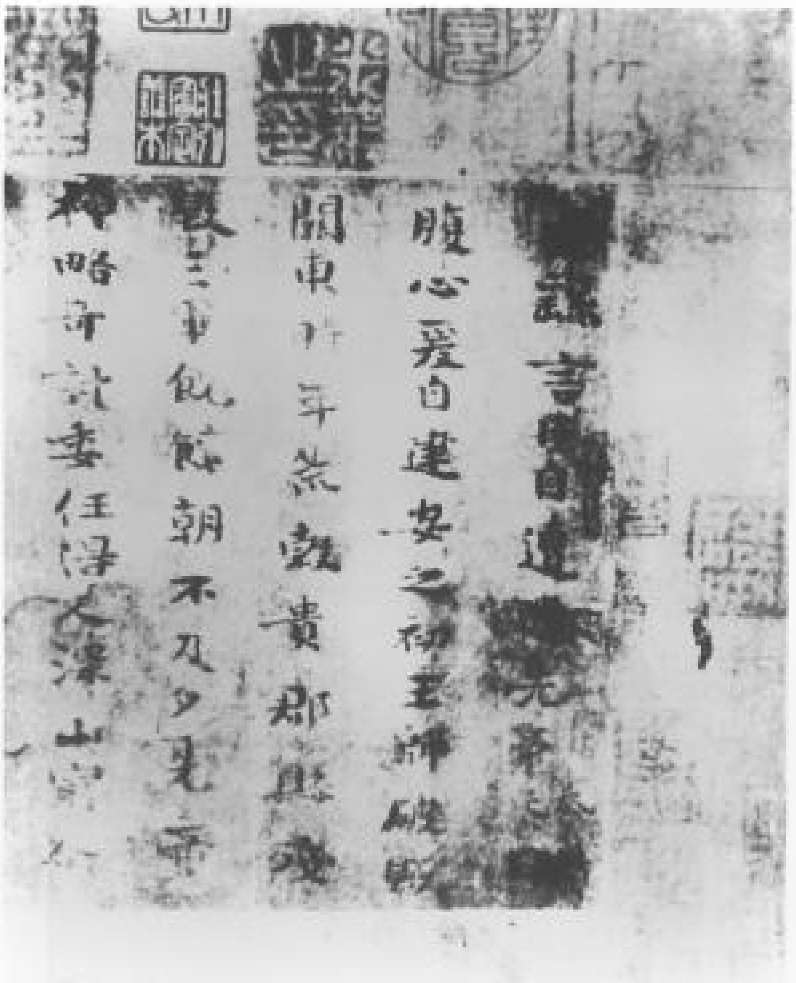




Fig. 56. Forgery of Chung Yu (151–230). Detail from *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih*. Handscroll. Present location unknown

Fig. 57. Forgery of Chung Yu (151–230). Rubbing of *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih*, early 12th century. Private collection, Japan

dynasties (14th–17th centuries), the most widely used model of Chung Yu's style was the *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* (figs. 56, 57), a work that was said to have been recorded in 1185 in a Southern Sung anthology.[23] Wang Shu (1668–1743), a leading early Ch'ing scholar, in his analysis of the calligraphy, argued that it was a late Northern Sung forgery.[24] And having made a study of Li's calligraphy in the early seventeenth-century anthology of rubbings *Calligraphic Works in the Hall of Wild Geese* (fig. 58) rather than in the original (pl. 8f), Wang Shu boldly speculated that the person responsible for this clever deception was none other than Li Kung-lin.

Until very recently, it had not been possible to verify Wang Shu's assertions, since the *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* was known only through engravings, the original manuscript having been destroyed early in this century. A photograph of the lost manuscript has, however, recently been discovered (fig. 56),[25] which has enabled us to compare the calligraphy with that of Li Kung-lin. While the composition of the characters closely resembles Li's, the brushwork is demonstrably weaker, devoid of the quality of variety and spontaneity that so vividly characterizes Li's style. Not only can we now absolve Li Kung-lin of complicity, we can also confidently attribute the *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* to an early twelfth-century follower of Li. That all major Yüan, Ming, and early Ch'ing artists who followed Chung Yu's calligraphic style (among them, Ni Tsan, Chu Yün-ming, Chu Ta, and Shih-t'ao) used the *Memorial* as their principal model is indicative of Li Kung-lin's success in estab-

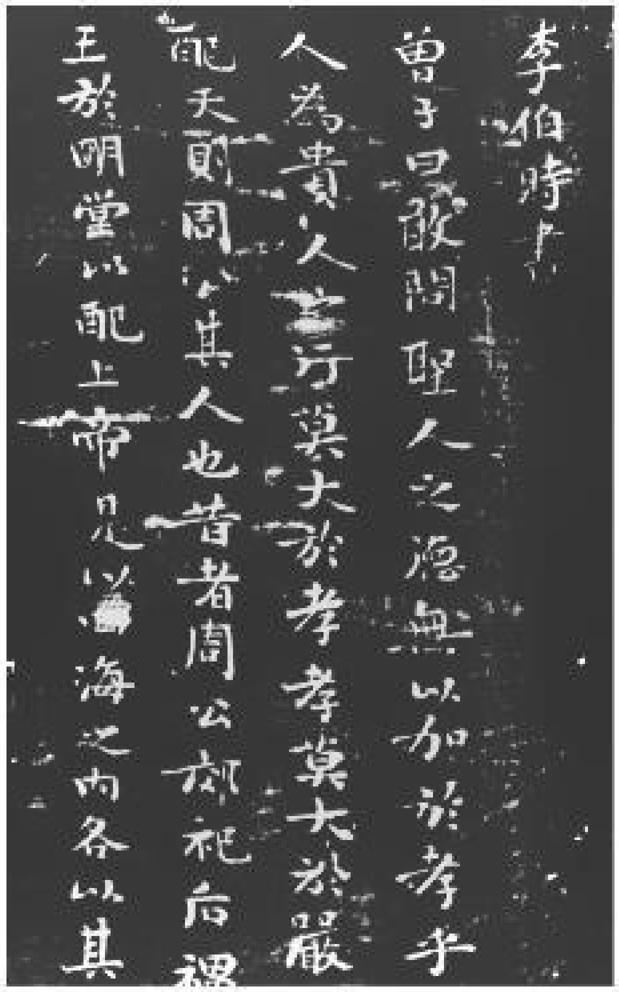


Fig. 58. Rubbing from *Calligraphic works in the Hall of Wild Geese*, compiled by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang in 1603. Detail from *The Classic of Filial Piety*, Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule" (pl. 8f). Marquand Library, Princeton University

lishing the style of Chung Yu and in defining his idiom as the preferred mode of the anti-orthodox recluse-scholar.

The Exile

In 1085, Emperor Shen-tsung died suddenly. As the new emperor, Che-tsung, was less than ten years old, the dowager empress Kao served as regent during the first seven years of his reign. The conservative party was again in power, and Su Shih, a favorite of the empress, was brought back from exile and made a tutor of the young ruler. In 1088, Su, the acknowledged leader of the capital literati, was named chief examiner of the *chin-shih* examination. He immediately appointed several of his young friends and followers, including Li Kung-lin and Huang T'ing-chien, to the position of examination grader. Until 1094—the term 1086–93 corresponding to the emperor's minority rule during the Yüan-yu reign—the capital, Pien-ching, under the influence of Su Shih and his friends, enjoyed a brilliant cultural renaissance.

Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105), from Fen-ning, Kiangsi Province, was the son of a poet, a nephew of a famous book collector, and through two successive marriages a son-in-law of two well-known literary figures. He achieved his *chin-shih* degree in 1067, became a professor in 1072 at the imperial Academy in the northern capital, Ta-ming-fu, Hopei Province, and served in subprefectural posts in Kiangsi and Shantung. In 1085, at the age of forty, he was made a reader at the imperial library at Pien-ching, assisting in the compilation



Fig. 59. Attributed to T'ao Hung-ching (452–536). *Burying a Crane,* ca. 512–14. Detail. Rubbing of an inscription carved on a boulder, Chiao-shan island, Chen-chiang, Kiangsu Province. Fujii Yurinkan, Kyoto

of the annals of the reign of Emperor Shen-tsung. By that time, he had already established his reputation as a leading poet and was a close friend and follower of Su Shih. After the death of the dowager empress, however, the reform party was reinstated in 1094, and Su Shih and his friends again came

Fig. 60. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung,* dated 1100. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13½ x 218⅛ in. (34.2 x 554 cm). Lent by John B. Elliott, The Art Museum, Princeton University (L.1969.180)

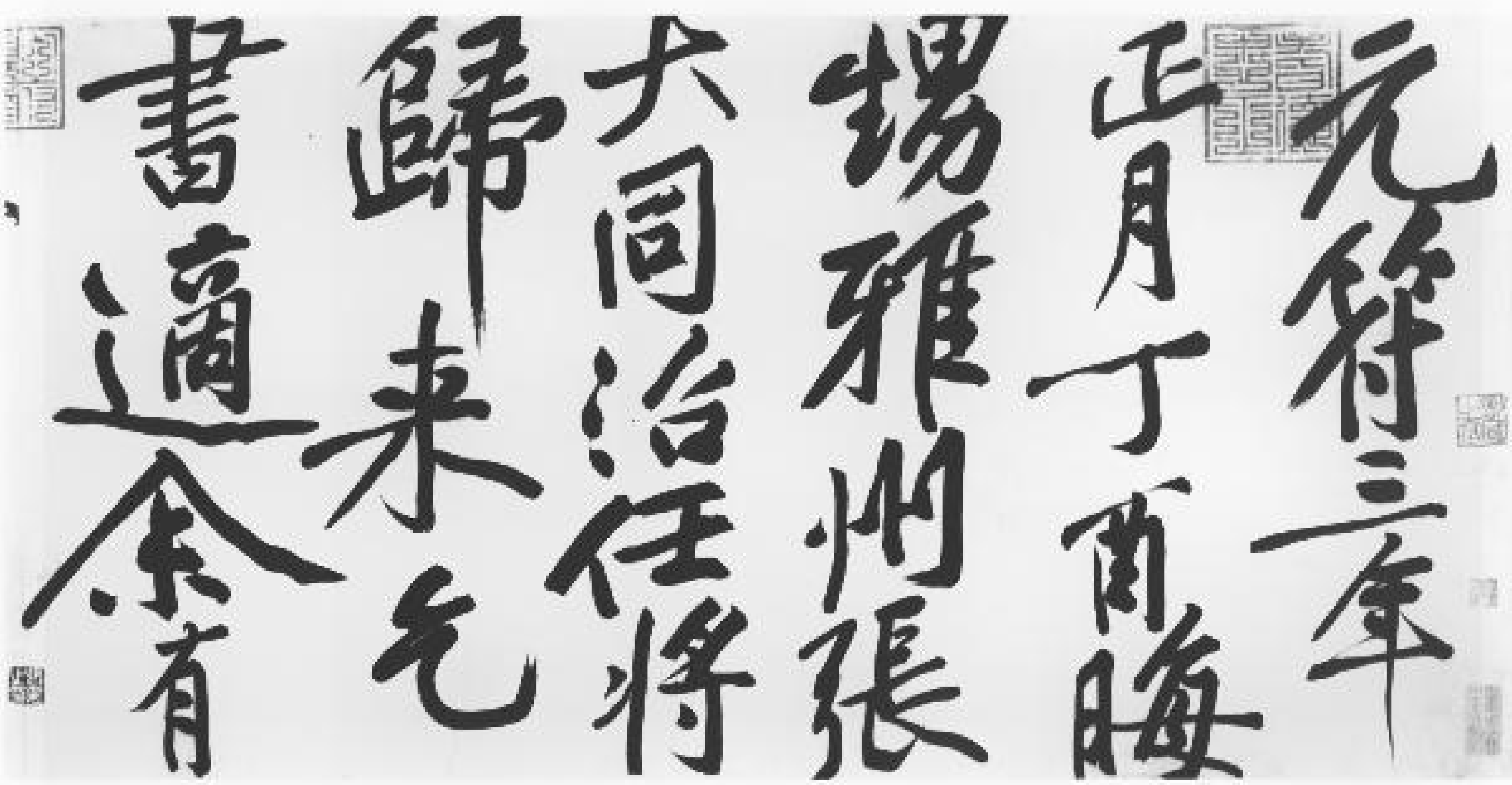
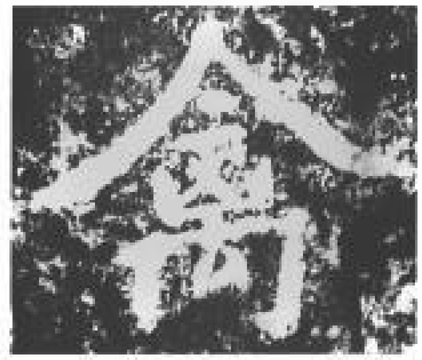


Fig. 61a. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). The character *she*. Detail from *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung* (fig. 60)

Fig. 61b. Attributed to T'ao Hung-ching (452–536). The character *ch'in*. Detail from *Burying a Crane* (fig. 59)



a

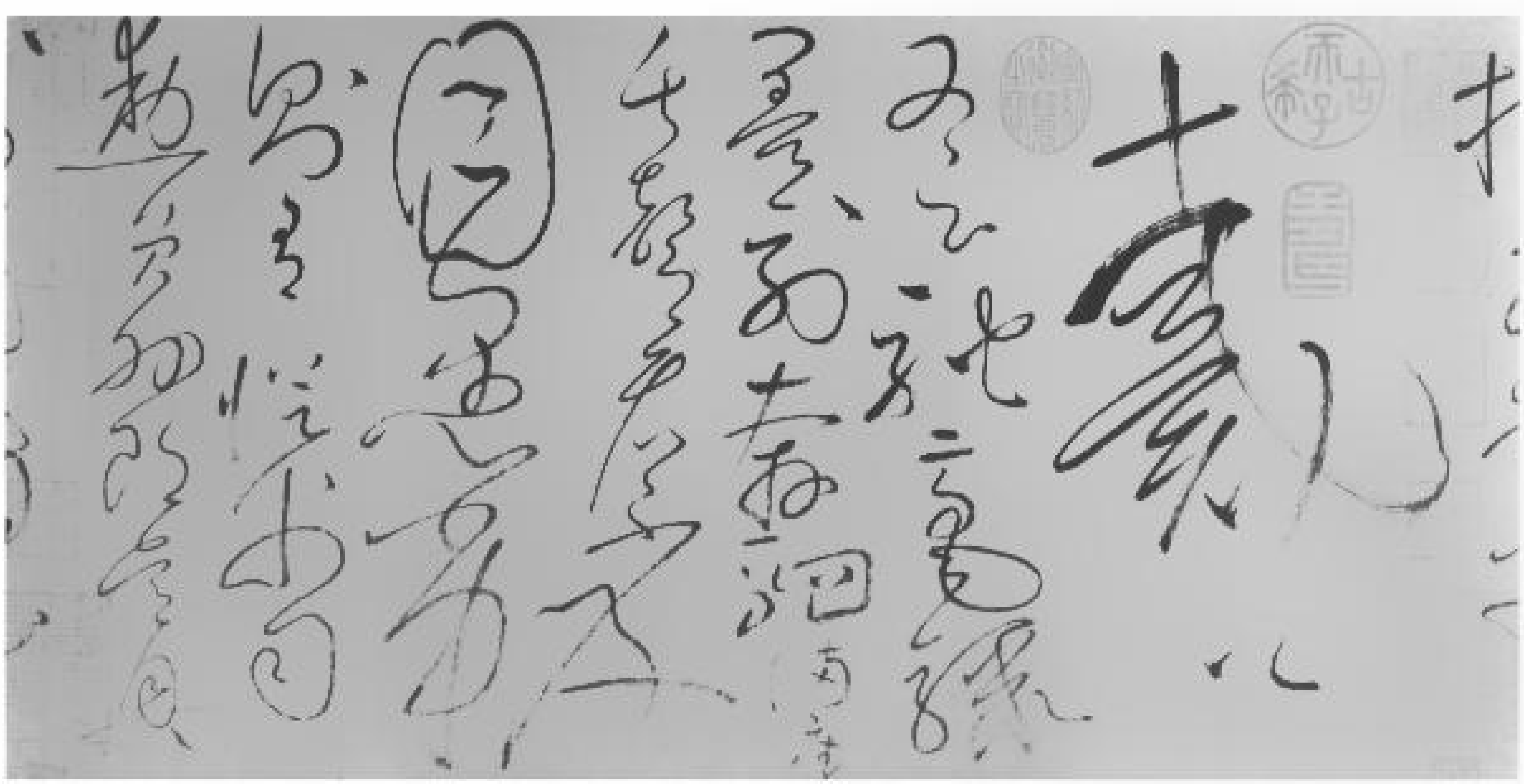


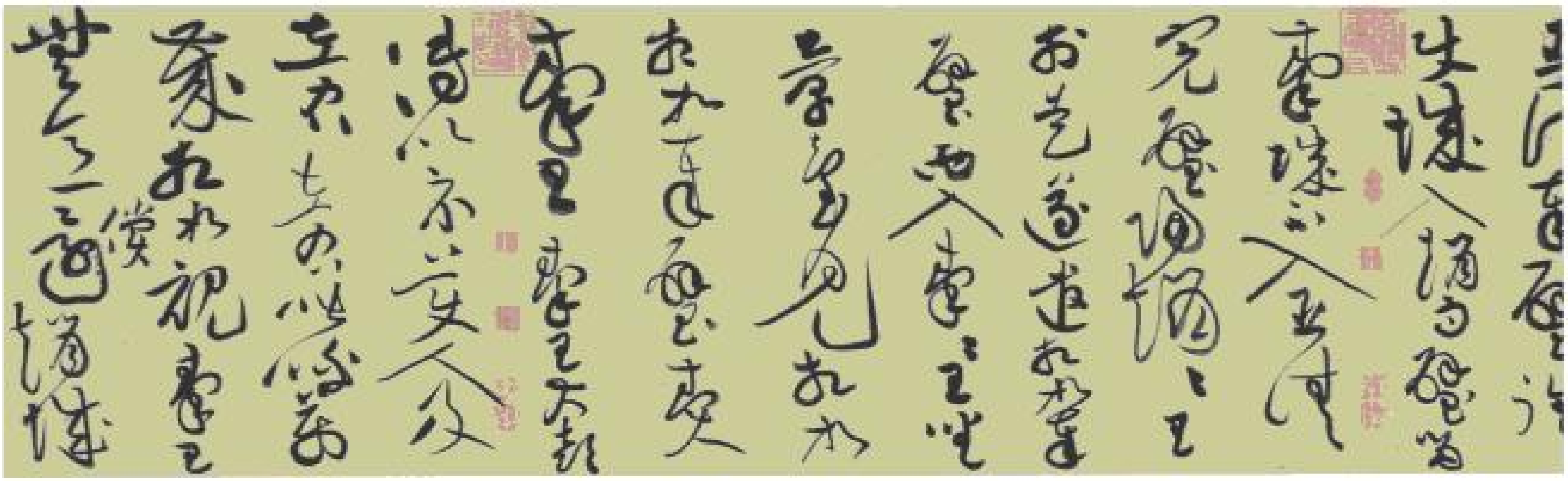
b

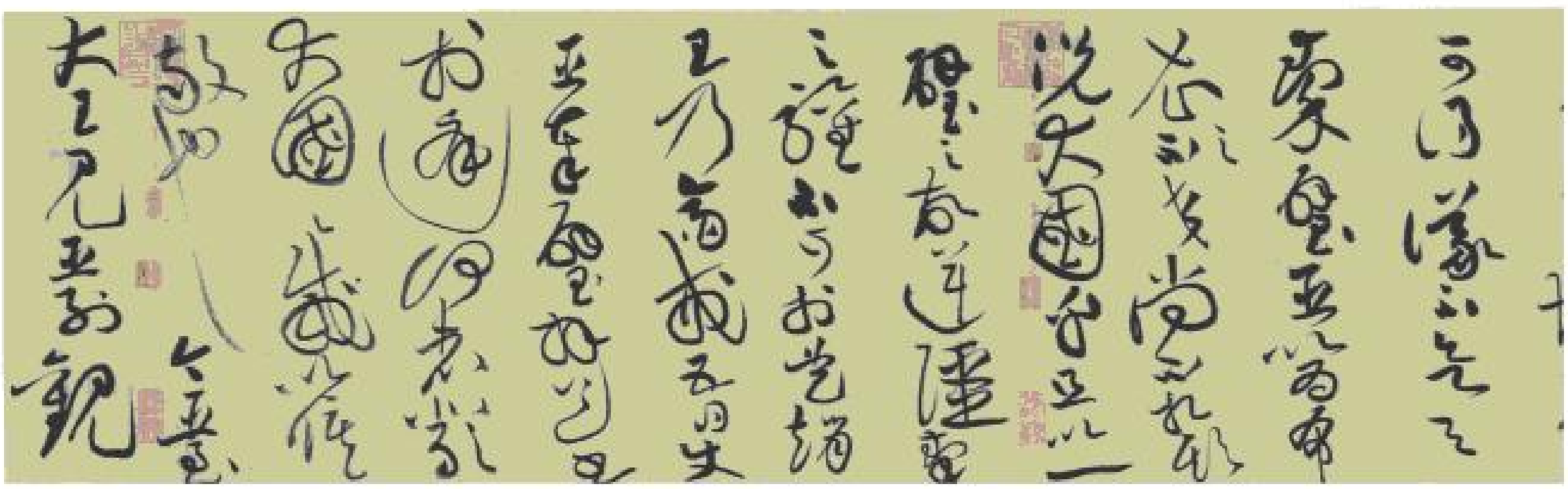
under censure. Although Huang T'ing-chien never held any office high enough to involve him in political infighting, his close association with Su was alone sufficient to result in his denunciation. Huang was exiled to Szechwan Province in 1094, pardoned in early 1100, and exiled again in 1103 to Kwangsi Province, where he died in late 1105.

A highly disciplined and hardworking Confucian scholar, Huang T'ing-chien in exile turned to Taoism and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism, to poetry and calligraphy. The principal models for early Northern Sung calligraphy were Wang Hsi-chih (fig. 44) and the eighth-century master of regular script Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 47). Yen was a scholar and statesman of great personal integrity. A courageous defender of T'ang territories during the rebellion of An Lu-shan, he later died at the hands of another rebel general. His robust calligraphic style shows powerful, squarely built characters and perfectly articulated brushstrokes. Early Northern Sung Neo-Confucian scholars saw Yen's style as the embodiment not only of aesthetic perfection but also of the moral uprightness and courage of the Confucian scholar-hero. Huang T'ing-chien, however, was dissatisfied with the rigidity and oversophistication of early Northern Sung

Fig. 62. Huai-su (725–785). *Autobiographical Essay*, dated 777. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 11 3/16 x 29 5/8 in. (28.3 x 755 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei





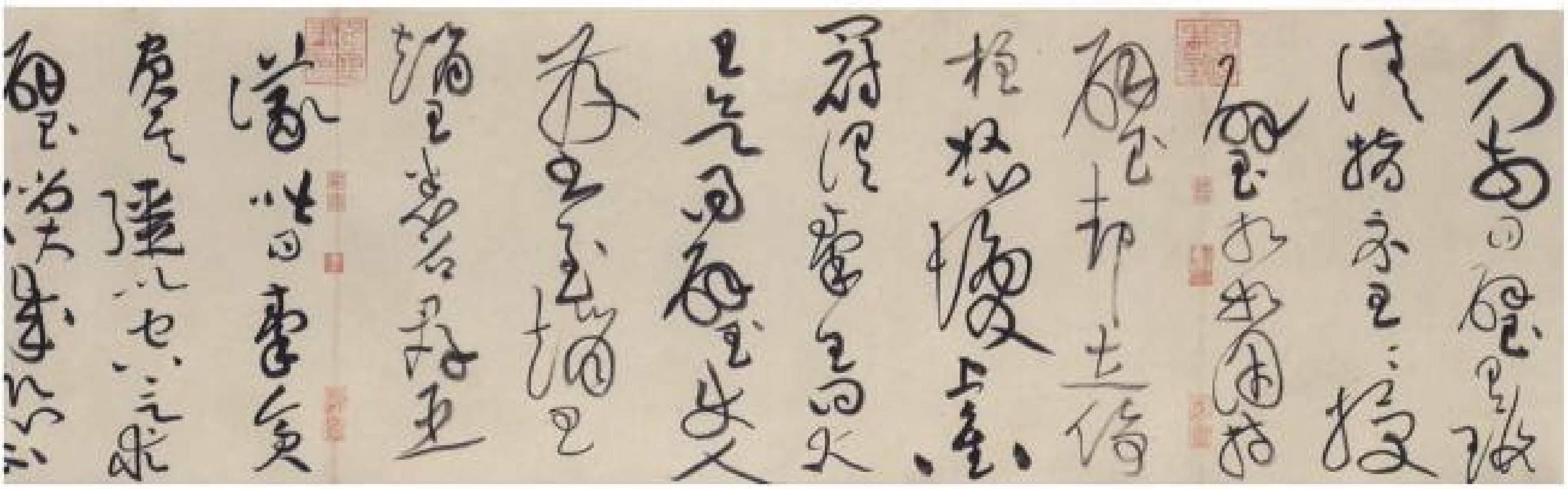


calligraphy and had little use for most T'ang calligraphy, with the exception of that by Yen Chen-ch'ing. He complained that "the untrammeled quality of the calligraphy of Wang Hsi-chih and his son [Wang Hsien-chih] is missing [in the work of the T'ang masters] Ou-yang Hsün [557–641], Yü Shih-nan [558–638], and Ch'u Sui-liang [596–658]."[26]

Having rejected the T'ang models, Huang, like Li Kung-lin, turned to archaeological sources for inspiration. One of the most influential was a sixth-century stone inscription, today known as *Burying a Crane* (fig. 59). Sometime before the eleventh century, on the island of Chiao-shan, near Chen-chiang on the southern shore of the Yangtze River, the cliff bearing the inscription was struck by lightning. Falling to the waters below, the stone broke into several pieces. During the eleventh century, the broken stones, with their bold, unorthodox calligraphic style were discovered, creating great excitement among scholars. For Huang T'ing-chien, who believed the inscription to be the work of Wang Hsi-chih, *Burying a Crane* was a model of simplicity and an expression of deep psychic energy, the plain, rounded forms and dynamic, asymmet-

Pls. 18a, b. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju*, ca. 1095. Details. Handscroll, ink on paper, 12 13/16 x 717 in. (32.5 x 1822.4 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.4)

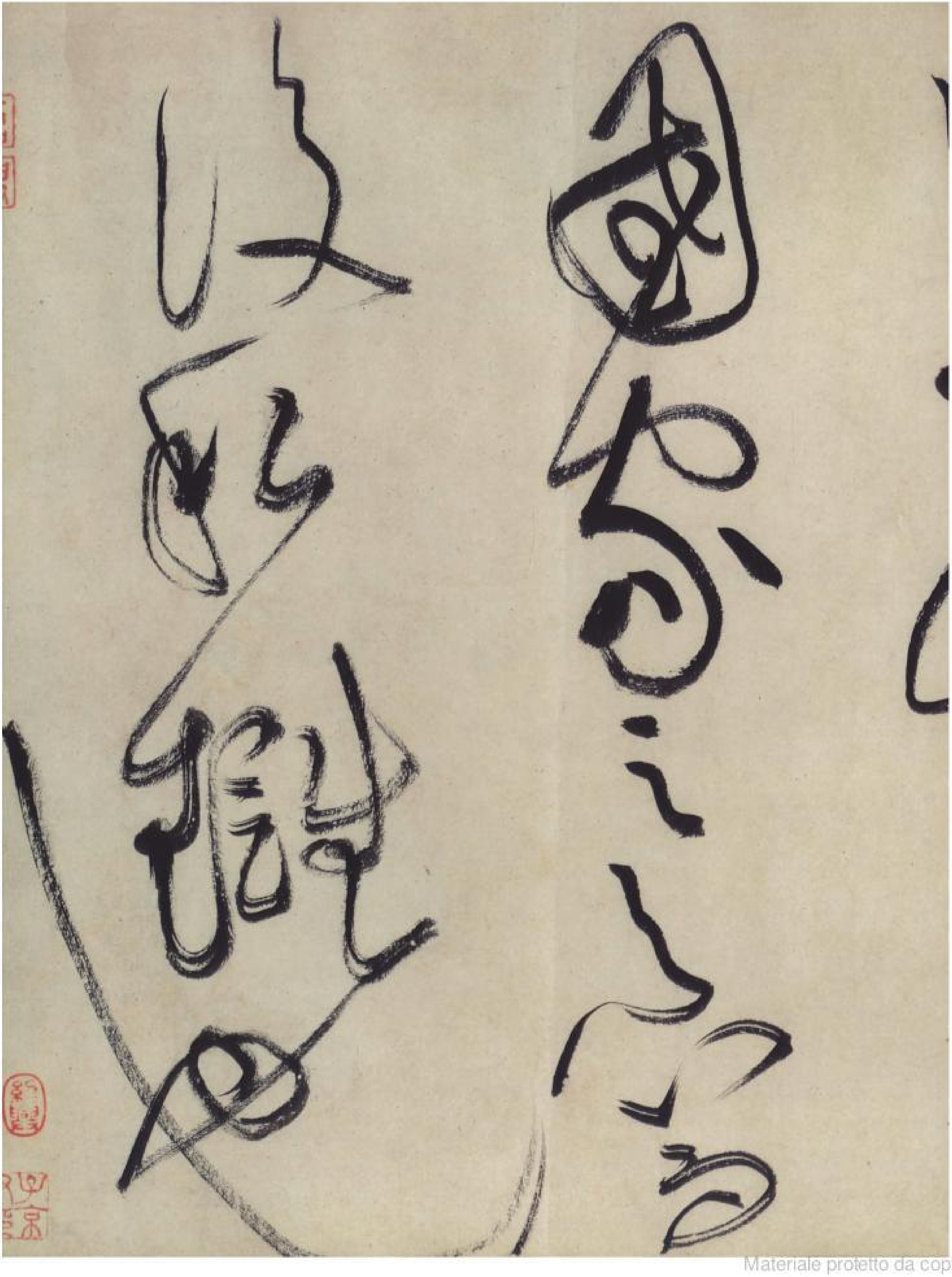


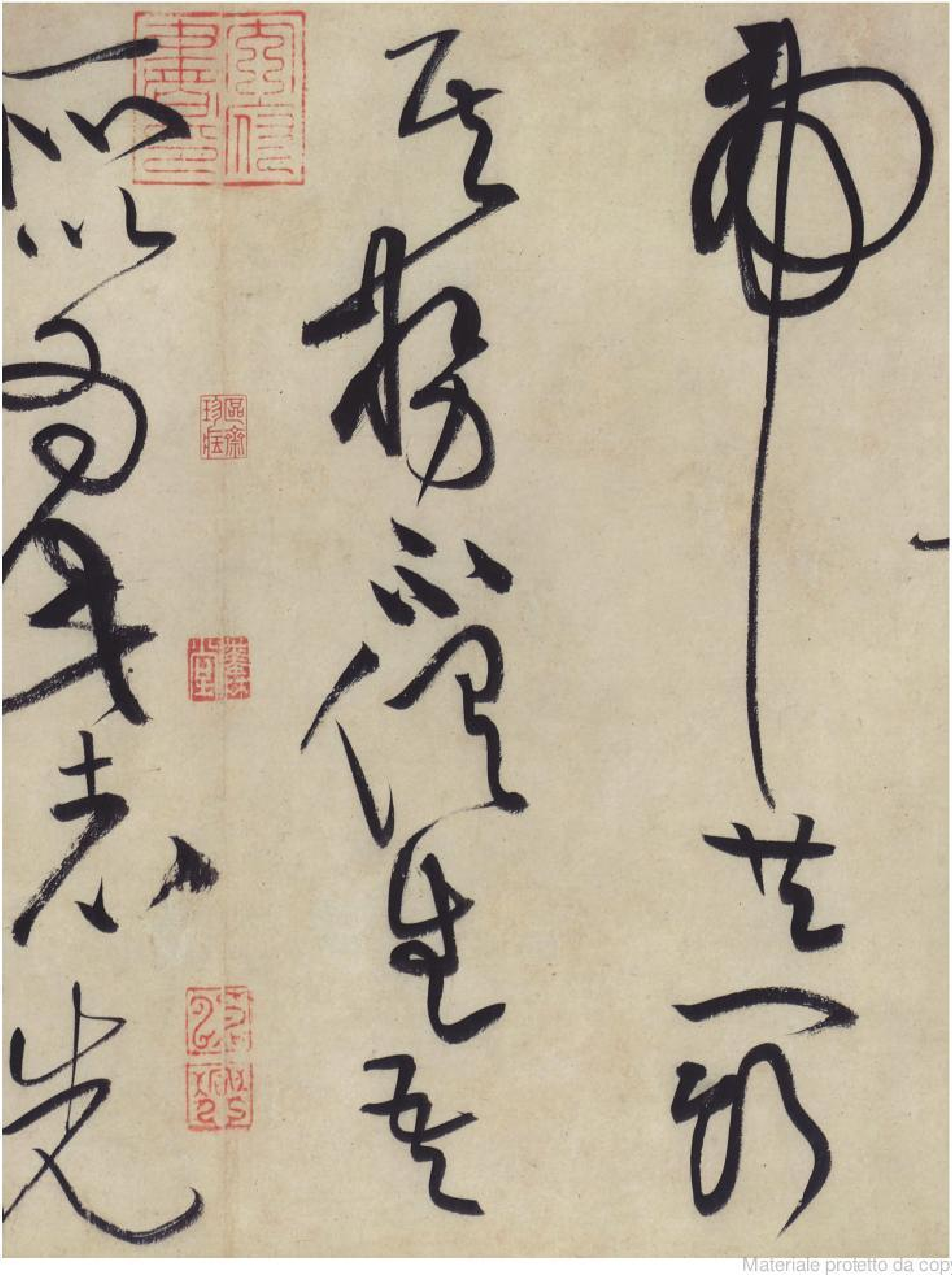


Overleaf
Pl. 18c. Detail from *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju*

rically balanced characters representing the very antithesis of the laboriously balanced square compositions he so disliked.

Huang described his own generous running script—for example, the powerful calligraphy on the *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung,* dated 1100 (fig. 60)—as pure movement and energy, emphasizing the momentum, or "brush force" (*shih*), of each individual stroke (fig. 61a).[27] Instead of following the upright forms of Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 47), Huang preferred the oblique, unbalanced forces of *Burying a Crane.* But while he imitated *Burying a Crane,* he did not copy it (fig. 61b). The secret of imitation, he wrote, is to let "the mind respond to suggestion." "When I use a quotation from the past, it becomes an elixir that transforms iron into gold."[28] Huang simplified his writing by the use of round brushwork, carefully concealing the tip of the brush at the center of each stroke. Holding the brush perpendicular to the paper, he wrote with his wrist and elbow suspended. In this way, he followed through on each stroke with the power of his entire arm and body rather than flicking the brush with his wrist and fingers. "Hold the palm round and hollow while the fingers grip





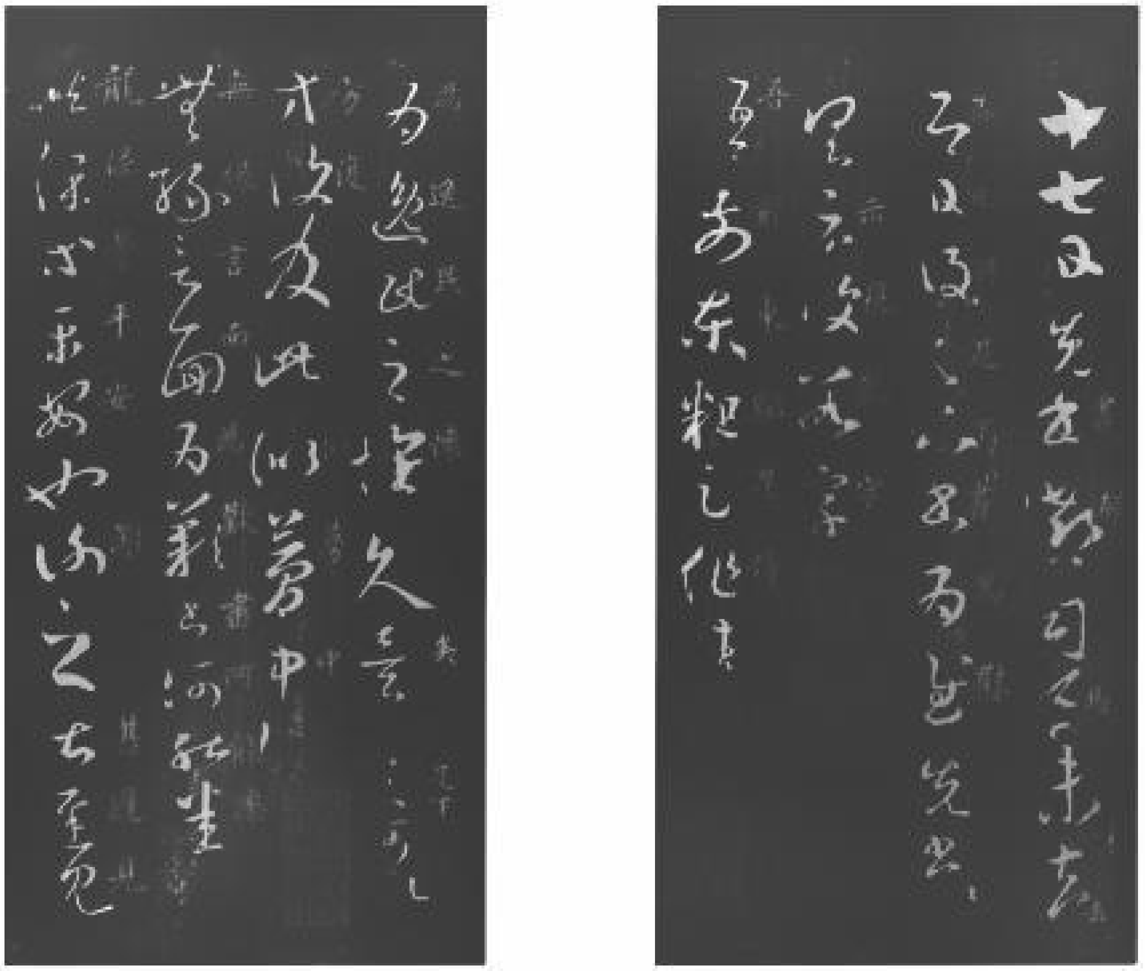


Fig. 63. Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). *On the Seventeenth Day.* Detail. Sung rubbing mounted as an album, ink on paper, each page 9⅝ x 5 in. (24.5 x 12.75 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 1991. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1991.380)

the brush firmly and solidly," he wrote, stressing the importance of "holding back as well as releasing energy."[29] Indeed, the strength of his grip was so powerful that it imparted a tremulous quality to the stroke.

In his "wild cursive" (*k'uang-ts'ao*) style, Huang found an expressive medium well suited to his strong, individualistic personality. The *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju* (pls. 18a, b), dating to about 1095, during Huang's first exile,[30] is a long handscroll of 203 lines and 1,700 characters. Written in a wild, flying cursive style, the text is taken from the *Records of the Grand Historian* (Chapter 81), by the great Han dynasty scholar Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145–86 B.C.), which tells of the political rivalry between two chief ministers of the kingdom of Chao during the Warring States period. Huang's transcription of the text ends with the remark by the minister Lin Hsiang-ju, "The reason I have avoided confrontation with General Lien is that the needs of the country must take precedence over any personal grievance!"(pl. 18c) Huang, writing this piece in exile, no doubt had in mind the bitter factional struggles at the capital, of which he was an unwitting victim.[31]

It is said that Huang T'ing-chien did not believe he had mastered the cursive style until 1099, when, exiled in Szechwan, he had a chance to study the famous *Autobiographical Essay* by the eighth-century T'ang "cursive sage" the Buddhist monk Huai-su (725–785), a copy of which is now in Taipei (fig. 62). It was Huai-su's belief that he did his best work while inebriated, when, in a state of high exhilaration, "his mind and his hand worked together in perfect harmony in the pursuit of pure adventure."[32] In the *Autobiographical Essay*,

Huai-su's characters are linked together to form a rapid, uninterrupted flow of darting, looping brushstrokes. Coursing the brush over the paper with exploding speed to form characters of dramatically different shapes and sizes, Huai-su transformed the wild cursive into a unified design that reflects the elemental forces of nature. Viewed character by character, however, the elements of Huai-su's cursive writing, typical of the T'ang period, are firmly rooted in the cursive clerical (*ts'ao-li*) tradition of Wang Hsi-chih (fig. 63), which shows balanced forms with level horizontals, erect verticals, and smooth, round curves and loops. Judging by the confidence and precision with which he carried out the fine details of his characters, it is clear that Huai-su had so thoroughly absorbed the Wang Hsi-chih model that his hand could barely move fast enough to capture the fleeting images on paper.

Indeed, Huang's cursive writing in the *Biographies*, in both individual character formation and emotional content, is very different from that of Huai-su. In contrast to Huai-su's balanced elements, Huang's horizontals and verticals tilt and abut one another; his forms willfully expand, contract, collide, and merge; his loops are wound tightly, with a jerk or a twist, as his brush turns abruptly, suddenly reversing itself in direction. In the character *kuan*, for example, while Huai-su's rendition (fig. 64b) turns Wang Hsi-chih's form (fig. 64a) into a graceful skater's dance, with gliding side steps and a series of smooth, intricate twirling movements, Huang's powerful, struggling brushwork (fig. 64c) is challenging and stubbornly resistant.

Like Li Kung-lin, Huang was an avid student of all forms of ancient calligraphy, including not only scripts incised in metal and stone but also brush or stylus writings on bamboo and wood slips. Envisioning the communion between the brushwork and compositional principles of all ancient writings, Huang observed, in a colophon dated 1099, that "cursive writing shares the methods and ideas of the tadpole, the seal, and the clerical scripts."[55] In archaic seal inscriptions (fig. 65a) the deep, rounded brushstrokes, cast or chiseled into the metal or stone surface, show the plastic energy of a sculpted object.

In his wild cursive writing Huang also creates vivid, three-dimensional images. Huai-su is said to have remarked once to Yen Chen-ch'ing, "When I see extraordinary mountains amid summer clouds, I try to re-create them. Good


a


b


c

Figs. 64a–c. The character *kuan*

a. Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from *On the Seventeenth Day* (fig. 63)

b. Huai-su (725–785). Detail from *Autobiographical Essay* (fig. 62)

c. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). Detail from *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju* (pls. 18a–c)


a


b


c

Fig. 65a. The character *chi*. Detail from *Stone Drums* (fig. 41)

Fig. 65b. Huai-su (725–785). The character *chi*. Detail from *Autobiographical Essay* (fig. 62)

Fig. 65c. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). The character *ch'eng*. Detail from *Biographies of Lien P'o and Lin Hsiang-ju* (pls. 18a–c)

calligraphy resembles a flock of birds darting out from trees, or startled snakes scurrying in the grass, or cracks bursting in a shattered wall."[34] While Huai-su creates swirling patterns on the picture surface (fig. 65b), Huang's twisting, turning brushstrokes (fig. 65c and pl. 18a) move three-dimensionally in space.

Seeing calligraphy as abstraction or pure movement, Huang described it by using the musical concept of "resonance" (*yün*), or musicality.[35] Huang, like Li Kung-lin an ardent admirer of the fourth-century recluse poet T'ao Ch'ien, compared T'ao's unadorned, natural poetry to the "music of a stringless zither,"[36] the sound beyond the notes. Huang's cursive calligraphy achieves a similar effect, and from his brush and ink traces emerges an imposing personality, that of an individual who remains, after nine hundred years, defiantly resolute, and direct in his expression.

Although Su Shih believed that artistic development had reached its zenith in the eighth century, it is clear that in the late eleventh century, Huang T'ing-chien's art represented not an end but a beginning. Viewing the archaic past as the exemplar for the future, late Northern Sung scholar-artists perceived themselves as part of a great tradition, one that had thrived long before they were born and would survive long after they had died. By achieving self-realization through their response to ancient models, Li Kung-lin became Chung Yu and Huang T'ing-chien became Huai-su. But in the process of creative assimilation, a transformation took place that permanently altered the course of the future.

The Eccentric

A very different personality from Huang T'ing-chien was Mi Fu (1052–1107). Never having earned a *chin-shih* degree and therefore consigned to a modest official career, Mi Fu gained fame instead as Sung China's prototypical bohemian scholar-artist.[37] Born in early 1052 in Hsiang-yang, Hupei Province, Mi Fu was the son of a military official and a lady-in-waiting to the wife of the future emperor Ying-tsung (r. 1064–67). Because of his family connections to the imperial household, in 1070, at the age of eighteen, he became a reader at the imperial library and in 1074 served briefly as a district officer in the southern city of Kuei-lin. He then held a clerical position in Ch'ang-sha, Hunan Prov-

ince. Beginning in 1081, he spent about ten years traveling through China, studying private collections of ancient calligraphy and painting. Having established himself as a distinguished connoisseur and scholar-artist, he visited and became friends with many of the leading scholar-officials and statesmen of his time, including in 1083 the former prime minister Wang An-shih, who was living in Nanking, and in 1084 Su Shih, then in exile in Huang-chou. Between 1086 and 1088, he finished his first work on ancient calligraphy, the *Catalogue of Precious Specimens of Calligraphy Visited.*[38]

Mi was nonconformist and impractical. With an obsessive single-mindedness, he devoted his life to the study and collecting of fine calligraphy and painting, strange garden rocks, and rare, early inkstones. To his Neo-Confucian contemporaries, his rejection of the conventional paths to success and his excessive attachment to art objects bore the marks of an eccentric. Calling himself the Wild Scholar of Hsiang-yang, he was known as Mi the Crazy. Anecdotes about Mi Fu abound in history. As a minor official, he had to rely on his wit and cleverness to gain access to highly placed art collectors. In his writings, he railed against socially privileged but culturally ignorant buyers of art and boasted of outwitting them with forgeries and copies. But because he did not collect for the purpose of material gain (he gave away his family wealth to poor relations), his unconventional behavior was tolerated, even admired, as harmless personal foible.

In 1092, he was appointed the district magistrate of Yung-ch'iu, Honan Province. But, taking action "in ignorance of government policy,"[39] he ran afoul of the tax collector and, brought back to the capital only two years later, was tried, convicted, and dismissed from office. Between 1099 and 1101, he was assigned to a state waterways agency, supervising the collecting and transportation of grain tax from the Lake T'ai area to the capital. Traveling on Lake T'ai and along the Grand Canal to the north, he often sailed, in a houseboat bearing the sign "The Mi Family Calligraphy and Painting Barge," with his collection of calligraphy and painting scrolls.

Mi finally won court recognition as a calligrapher after the new emperor, Hui-tsung, ascended the throne in 1101. In 1105, Mi was named the sole Doctor of Calligraphy and Painting at Hui-tsung's newly created Calligraphy and Painting Institute. A great admirer of Mi, the emperor reportedly tried to shield him from criticism, saying that "such a brilliant person should not be judged by ordinary rules of etiquette."[40] The prime minister, Ts'ai Ching, also an admirer, is said to have remarked, "Mi Fu is the kind of person we must have one of, but cannot afford to have two of!"[41] Again, due to some infraction of the law, an imperial censor had Mi demoted to a minor post in Kiangsu. He died there in 1107.

With his incomparable knowledge of ancient calligraphic styles, Mi developed an encyclopedic approach to his own calligraphy. He has given an account of his course of study, methodically working backward step by step from the T'ang masters Yen Chen-ch'ing and Liu Kung-ch'üan through the early T'ang back to the Tsin and Wei and finally to the earliest sources:

> In the beginning I studied Yen Chen-ch'ing [fig. 47]; I was then six or seven years old. I practiced characters in a large format, but I was not yet able to do small-size writing. I became attracted to the tight composition of Liu Kung-ch'üan. . . . I [also] studied Ou-yang Hsün [fig. 55a], but before long my writing began to look like a wood-block print or the sliding beads of an abacus. I then became enamored of Ch'u Sui-liang's style, which I studied the longest. . . . I went through all the anthologies of rubbings [figs. 43, 44, 63]. Gradually, I moved back to the [Western] Tsin and Wei styles [primarily the two Wangs; figs. 44, 63], cultivating the plain, light [*p'ing-tan*] style. Passing over the method of Chung Yu [fig. 43], I studied a [second-century] stone stele [see fig. 42]. . . . For the seal script, I admired "A Chant Cursing the Ch'u People" [ca. 320 B.C.] and the Stone Drums inscription [ca. 422 B.C.; fig. 41]. I also gained insight into writings on bamboo slips [fig. 52], done with a bamboo stylus dipped in lacquer, as well as into the wonders of archaic inscriptions on bronze vessels [fig. 40].[42]

And later he wrote, "Before I was able to establish my own style, people criticized my calligraphy as merely the scribbling of an antiquarian. It was not until after I reached old age that I found my own style."[43]

A complex and willful individual, Mi lived a life of paradoxes. Because he was sensitive about his non-Chinese origins (his remote forebears had emigrated from the Central Asian region of Sogdia), he was inordinately proud of his native Hsiang-yang and imagined himself a descendant of the ancient kings of Ch'u, rulers of Hsiang-yang during the Warring States period. Devoting himself to the finer things of the world, he possessed the connoisseur's fierce dedication to high standards, yet he flouted material wealth and disregarded social conventions. With unparalleled skills, he was a chameleonlike imitator of styles, yet he disdained technical facility, achieving mastery of ancient styles only to reject them. He was the most technically accomplished calligrapher ever to have advocated simplicity and spontaneity, and he held up the "plain and natural" (*p'ing-tan t'ien-chen*) style as his aesthetic goal.

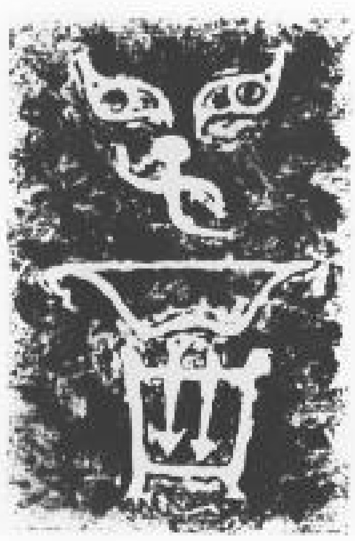
Mi Fu was highly critical of the T'ang masters, including Yen Chen-ch'ing. "From the time Yen Chen-ch'ing began to follow Ch'u Sui-liang, achieving fame for his 'flicking and kicking' brushstrokes, his style became too affected," he wrote. "[Yen's style] lacks simplicity and a certain light and natural quality."[44] Mi made a careful study of the works of Wang Hsi-chih and Wang Hsien-chih, but reaching yet further back in history he passed over Chung Yu, since he had "not seen a single ink work from the Wei period [A.D. 220–65],"[45] and turned instead to archaeological materials such as bamboo slips and bronze and stone inscriptions. He was finally inspired by the earliest seal script, the pictograph. "In the seal script," he wrote, "individual characters are sometimes large and sometimes small, representing the forms of a hundred things [in nature]. Alive and full of motion, round and complete, each is a self-contained image."[46]

In Mi's famous *Letter About a Coral Tree* (fig. 66), datable to the last



Fig. 66. Mi Fu (1052–1107). *Letter About a Coral Tree*, ca. 1101. Album leaf, ink on paper, 10½ x 18½ in. (26.6 x 47.1 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Fig. 67. Pictograph from a *yu* bronze ritual wine vessel, Shang dynasty, 13th–11th century B.C. Rubbing. Museum Purchase from the C. D. Carter Collection, Gift of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, The Art Museum, Princeton University (1965-5)

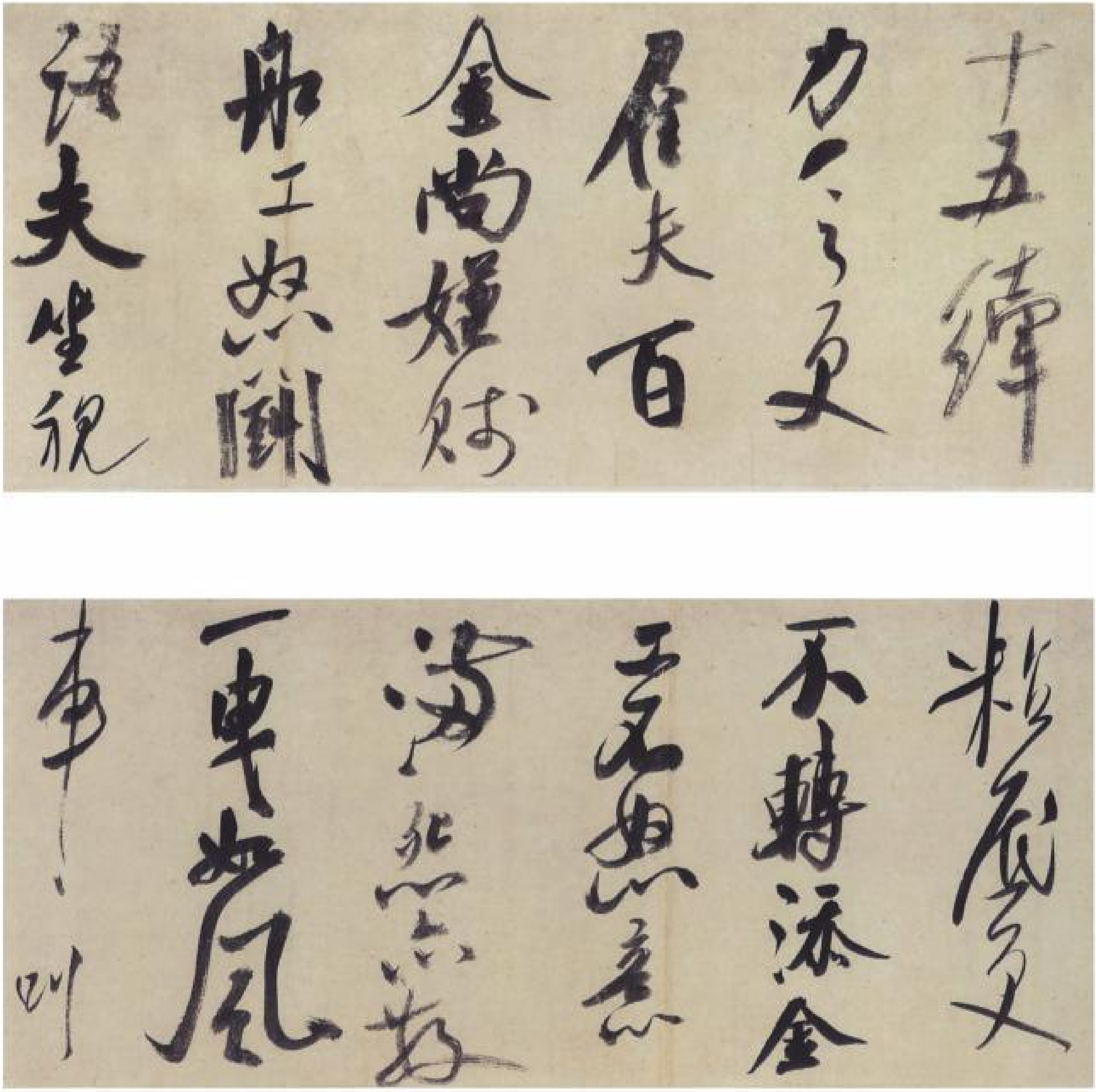


years of his life, he drew a magnificent three-pronged coral mounted on a metal stand. The drawing resembles a pictograph found on a Shang dynasty bronze ritual vessel (fig. 67), in which the twisting, writhing, round strokes give the image a three-dimensional quality—what Mi calls an "eight-sided" (*pa-mien*) look.

The large handscroll *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River* (pl. 19) was done around 1100, when Mi was in the Lake T'ai region. Sailing in his houseboat on the river and surrounded by the splendors of nature, Mi, master of his own universe, wrote his large-size calligraphy in an unbridled running-cursive style. Su Shih described Mi's calligraphy as "a sailboat in a gust of wind, or a warhorse charging into battle."[47] Asked by Emperor Hui-tsung to compare his own calligraphy with those of his famous contemporaries, Mi Fu had replied, "Huang T'ing-chien draws [*miao*] his characters, Su Shih paints [*hua*] his . . . [but] I sweep [*shua*] mine."[48]

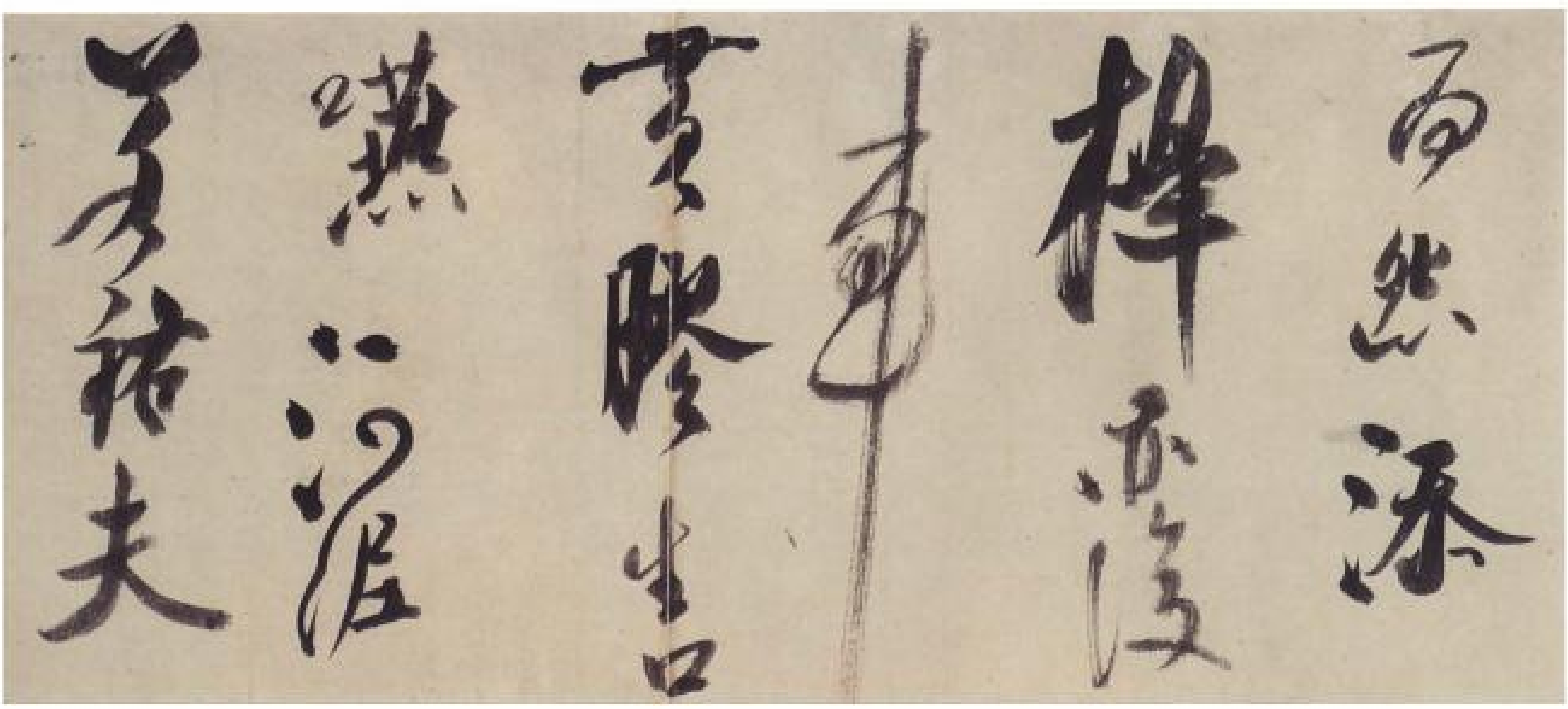
Whereas in Huang T'ing-chien's wild cursive (pl. 18), characters are subsumed by an exuberant rhythmic flow and movement, Mi Fu's images stand alone, powerfully individual. The dramatic visual impact of Mi's characters is rivaled only by that of Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 47), the T'ang calligrapher whose "flicking and kicking" brush methods Mi had, ironically, decried. In the characters *kuan* (figs. 68a, b) and *chan* (figs. 69a, b), for example, where Yen emphasizes articulation of brushwork and stability of composition, Mi ignores structure in favor of brush force, speed, and movement.

Large characters (figs. 68b, 69b), for Mi, "should look as if they were small ones, complete with sharp-edged strokes, and without an artificial and

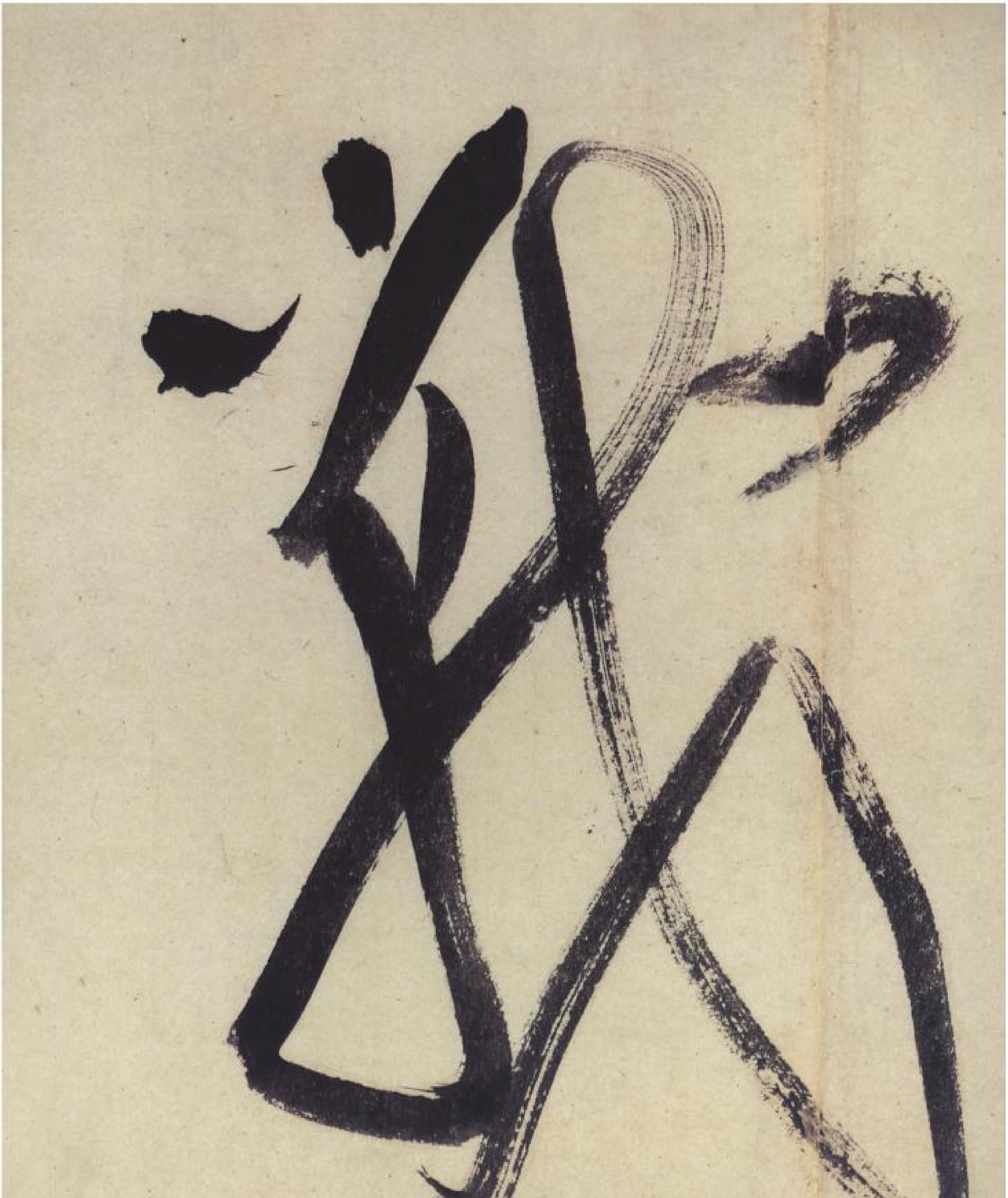


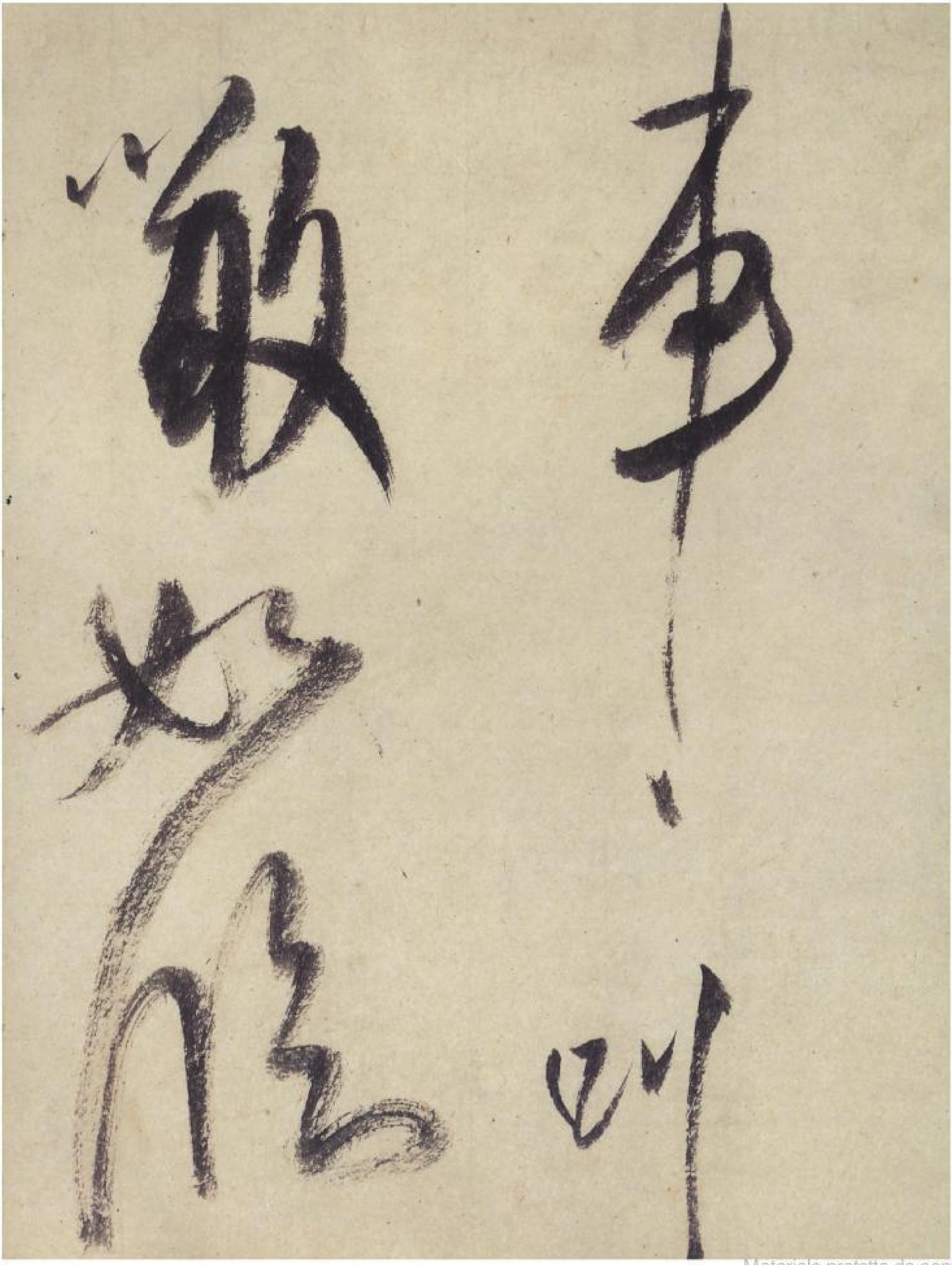
Pl. 19a. Mi Fu (1052–1107). *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River*, ca. 1100. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 12 5/16 x 220 1/4 in. (31.3 x 559.8 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., in honor of Professor Wen Fong, 1984 (1984.174)





Overleaf
Pl. 19b. Detail from *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River*







a



b

Figs. 68a, b. The character *kuan*

a. Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785). Detail from *Stele for the Yen Family Ancestral Temple* (fig. 55b)

b. Mi Fu (1052–1107). Detail from *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River* (pls. 19a, b)



a



b

Figs. 69a, b. The character *chan*

a. Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785). Detail from a rubbing of *Poem to Send Off General P'ei.* Shodō Hakubutsukan, Tokyo

b. Mi Fu (1052–1107). Detail from *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River* (pl. 19b)

labored look."[49] Like Huang T'ing-chien (fig. 60), Mi favored calligraphy with "oblique" (*ts'e*) rather than frontal and upright forces, so that his characters usually tilt to one side. But whereas Huang's brushwork is tightly controlled, Mi's is loose, spontaneous, and unpredictable. While Huang gripped his brush, Mi believed the brush should be held easily, with a light touch: "Let the palm arch loosely and freely, so that the brush movement can be swift and natural, and can happen unintentionally. . . . The pressure of the fingers on the brush should not always be the same; let it be natural and spontaneous."[50]

Mi's *chan*, which means "to battle" (fig. 69b), was formed the same way as his pictographic coral tree (fig. 66); he painted the character by giving free rein to his brushwork, allowing the stroke to twist and turn sculpturally in space. For Mi, the most powerful calligraphic image must, ultimately, resemble the ancient pictograph, which is "alive and full of motion, round and complete."[51]

Hermitage by the Sea

The rise of a new class of amateur scholar-official painters in the second half of the eleventh century profoundly influenced the nature of late Northern Sung landscape painting. *River Village in Autumn Dawn* (pl. 20), attributed to Chao Ling-jang (active ca. 1070–after 1100), an imperial scion and a nephew of Emperor Shen-tsung, depicts a quiet riverbank on a cold autumn morning. Because of Chao's aristocratic background, critics at first dismissed him as a mere dabbler in small scenes, incapable of painting important landscapes.[52] It is said that as a member of the imperial family, Chao was obliged to live within five hundred *li* (less than two hundred miles) of the capital, Pien-ching.

Each time Chao made a painting, a friend would joke with him, "This must be the result of another trip to your family tombs in the suburbs!"[13] In *River Village*, a damp mist enshrouds a cluster of houses nestled among trees, the early morning stillness broken by the flight of wild geese; a fisherman sits beneath a thatched hut, silently awaiting his first morning catch. As a turning away from the complex, monumental "true" landscape favored by Emperor Shen-tsung, Chao's art anticipates the refined antiquarianism of Hui-tsung's Painting Academy (pl. 13).

In a colophon on *River Village*, the leading early Yüan scholar-official artist Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322) sees Chao Ling-jang's misty landscape as representing the "hermitage by the sea [*ts'ang-chou*]," a reference to the famous lines by the fifth-century recluse Yüan Ts'an:

> Though I live at the center of the kingdom,
> I have left my soul in my hermitage by the sea.[14]

Like Yüan Ts'an, Chao Ling-jang in *River Village* expresses his longing for freedom. A representation of an unattainable dream of a nobleman in confinement, Chao's poignant landscape savors of the same melancholic feeling that pervades the work of another imperial clansman, Wang Shen (fig. 33).

There occurred during this time a conscious convergence between painting and calligraphy, the twin arts of the scholar-official. As Li Kung-lin and Mi Fu had "painted" their calligraphy, so Chao Ling-jang now "wrote" his paintings. In treating landscape elements as schematic shapes and patterns on the picture surface, Chao nevertheless transformed his simplified brushwork and broad ink wash into a moving, natural vision.

River Village, a painting by a scholar-official, like a scholar-official's calligraphy owes its inspiration to ancient styles. Like Li Kung-lin, who painted human figures using calligraphic formulas, Chao achieves his landscape with simplified brushwork and compositional schemata. Mi Fu was the first to note that Chao Ling-jang drew on scenes attributed to the T'ang poet-painter Wang Wei (699?–761?) for his own compositional patterns.[15] *River Village* represents the return of landscape as narrative and poetic illustration. A student of the early masters and a collector of ancient paintings, Chao reflects both the archaic space cell of Wang Wei's *Wang-ch'uan Villa* (fig. 27) and the compositions of Lu Hung (fig. 28).

In a now missing colophon written on *River Village*, Chao Meng-fu had referred to the composition as "a copy of Wang Wei's *Riverbank After Snow*."[16] *Snow on the Riverbank* (fig. 70), a handscroll attributed to Wang Wei, in its composition resembles *River Village*.[17] Both landscapes show typical late eleventh-century innovations. The landscape forms range from front to back in a continuous sweep, and foreground and background elements are telescoped together, with distant landscape elements seen through the trees in front. Though linked to Wang Wei's *Riverbank After Snow* by its title, *Snow on the Riverbank*, in strongly reflecting Chao Ling-jang's style as well as composition, appears to be a painting after Chao rather than a work by Wang Wei.



Cloudy Mountains

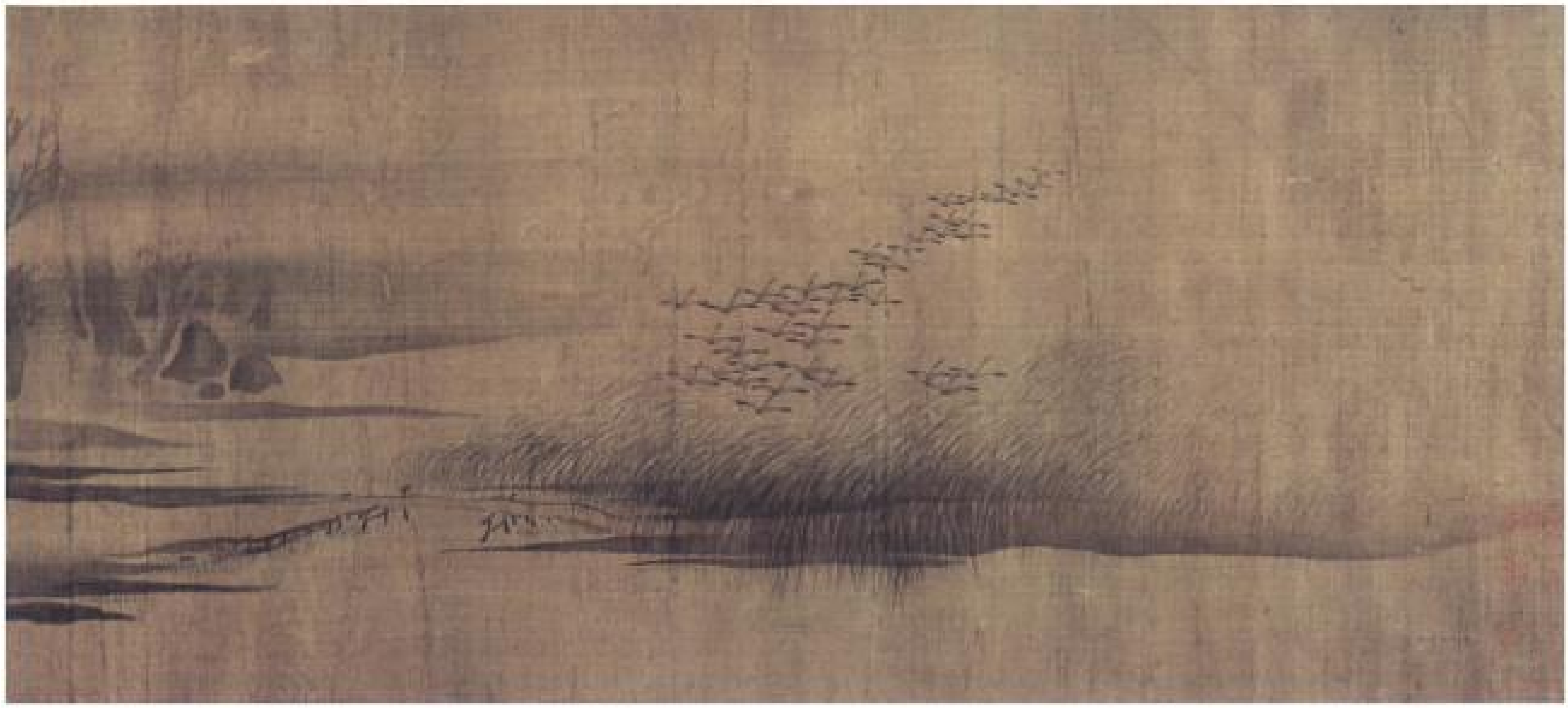
Pl. 20. Attributed to Chao Ling-jang (active ca. 1070–after 1100). *River Village in Autumn Dawn.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, $9\frac{5}{16}$ x 41 in. (23.6 x 104.2 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.2)

Mi Fu, the foremost art critic and connoisseur of his time, wrote the influential *History of Painting* and was instrumental in defining the late Northern Sung scholar-official taste in both painting and painting history. Rejecting Kuo Hsi's emotional naturalism in landscape painting (pl. 11), Mi advocated a reexamination of the Southern landscape style of the long-neglected tenth-century master Tung Yüan (fig. 31), the "plain and natural" quality of which he considered essential to good art. In pursuing the ideal of naturalness, Mi created landscape forms using found objects as well as brushes. According to the thirteenth-century writer Chao Hsi-ku,

> Mi was not a born painter, but because he was steeped in the landscapes he so loved, his imitations of them captured the essence of their naturalness. When he made "ink plays [dots]," he did not always use a brush; he would paint with strips of twisted paper or sugarcane husks, or even the seedpods of lotus flowers.[18]

Fig. 70. Attributed to Wang Wei (699?–761?). *Snow on the Riverbank.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, $9\frac{3}{4}$ x $64\frac{1}{8}$ in. (24.8 x 162.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei





Although no paintings by Mi Fu survive, we may speculate on the origins of his style. In 1074, at the age of twenty-two (twenty-three *sui*), while serving as a district officer in the southern city of Kuei-lin, Kwangsi Province, Mi had a portrait of himself carved in the stalactite Cave of the Returning Pearl, Huan-chu-tung (fig. 71). Though never mentioned in any historical writings on Mi, the verdant, conical mountains of Kuei-lin, covered with swirling clouds (fig. 72), probably inspired Mi's famous "ink dot" (*Mi-tien*) style of the so-called landscapes of cloudy mountains.

The Mi family ink-dot technique is well represented by the works of Mi Fu's son Mi Yu-jen (1074–1151).[19] Growing up in the area of the Hsiao and Hsiang rivers, Mi Yu-jen spent much of his adult life in Jun-chou, Kiangsu Province, where his formerly peripatetic father had a more permanent home in the 1090s. The oldest of Mi Fu's five sons, he was not only talented in his own right but also very much like his father in temperament and strength of character. Rather than pursuing a *chin-shih* degree, he studied calligraphy and painting under his father's tutelage. In 1105, when the elder Mi was honored by a private audience with Emperor Hui-tsung, he presented him with a painting by his son entitled *Pure Dawn in the Mountains of Ch'u.* That moment of glory in Mi Yu-jen's life sealed his fate as the keeper of his father's legacy. For close to half a century after that event, Mi Yu-jen continued to develop the theme of cloudy mountains in both his painting and poetry.

In 1134, Mi Yu-jen, at the age of fifty-nine, went to Lin-an for an audience with Emperor Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62). The inscription by the artist on his painting *Distant Peaks and Clearing Clouds* (fig. 73), a simple landscape with swirling clouds over a river between wooded banks and distant peaks, explains that he has just arrived in Lin-an by boat and is lodging probably at a temple

in the Chi-pao Mountains. It is said that in Mi's native river country, vaporous landscapes resemble clouds and clouds look like landscapes. In the painting, executed in light ink wash and horizontal dabs of ink, with tree trunks depicted in single, round brushstrokes without any suggestion of roots, the landscape forms emerge from the paper like drifting clouds in the sky.

For scholar-official families of the Southern Sung, the 1130s was a time of continuing political instability and hardship. "Cloudy mountains" thus became, for Mi Yu-jen, a metaphor for life and its vicissitudes as well as an image of the mind. A representation of the ineffable, Mi Yu-jen's *Distant Peaks and Clearing Clouds* echoes the famous lines of Southern Sung poetry criticism by Yen Yü (1180–1225): "[A good poem should be like] a sound in midair, colors in an apparition, moonlight in water, or images in a mirror. While words are exhaustible, ideas barely suggested are limitless."[60] The painting of the clouds further brings to mind the phrase from the *Analects* "Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud,"[61] as Mi's floating clouds symbolize the recluse's detachment from both political and social upheavals and from the mundanity of daily life.

By the 1140s, Mi Yu-jen found himself living in a world vastly changed from that in which, half a century earlier, his *Pure Dawn in the Mountains of Ch'u* had been presented to Emperor Hui-tsung. The Southern Sung court, having survived the Jurchen Chin onslaught and regained its authority, was eager not only to use art as an ornament of political stability but also to recreate an orthodox tradition in art for the furtherance of dynastic legitimacy. While the elder Mi lived the life of an eccentric (though he was perhaps never entirely free of worldly ambition), Mi Yu-jen now succeeded brilliantly as both an artist and a scholar-official. During the last decade of his life, largely through his recognition as a connoisseur of calligraphy, he achieved great distinction at the Southern Sung court. He was named Vice Director of Palace

Fig. 71. Mi Fu (1052–1107). *Self-Portrait.* Rubbing from a stone carving in Huan-chu-tung Cave, Kuei-lin, Kwangsi

Fig. 72. Mountains, Kuei-lin. Photograph by Wen C. Fong, 1983







Fig. 73. Mi Yu-jen (1074–1151). *Distant Peaks and Clearing Clouds*, dated February 9, 1134. Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll, ink on paper, 9¾ x 11¼ in. (24.7 x 28.6 cm). Osaka Municipal Museum of Fine Arts

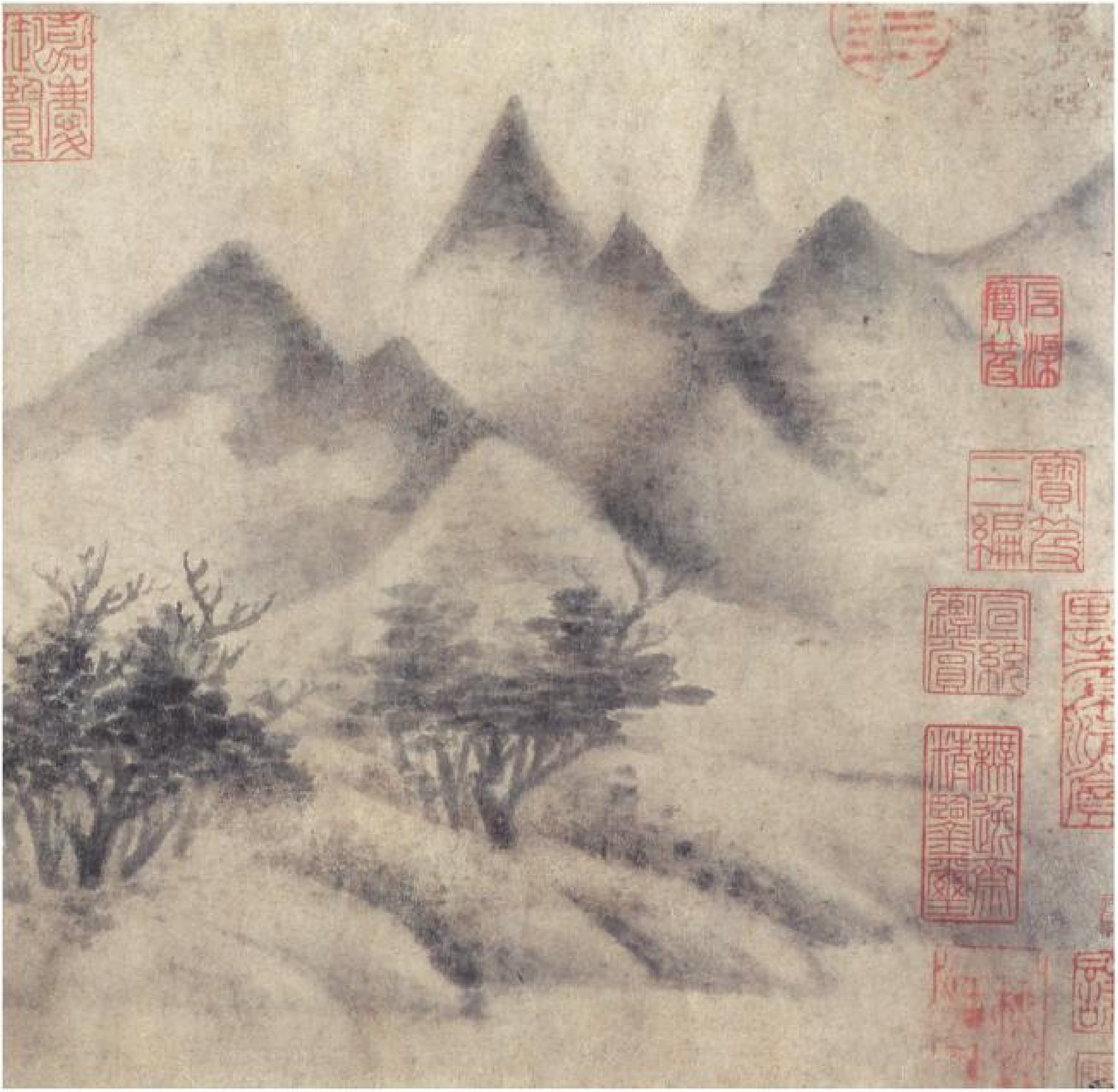
Buildings in 1142, and two years later was promoted to the position of Vice Minister of the Board of Works. As an adviser to the emperor, he played an important role in the building of the imperial art collections. According to the twelfth-century art historian Teng Ch'un, the author of *A Continuation of the History of Painting*,

> [Mi Yu-jen], who met with the emperor's favor and was promoted to the position of Vice Minister of the Board of Works and Auxiliary Academician of the Fu-wen Library, was daily assigned to serve the emperor during his leisure hours. Before he was so honored, scholars were able to acquire his paintings, but having achieved such preeminence, he became inaccessible and self-important, to the extent that even his relatives and old friends were unable to obtain his works. People mocked him with a verse:
>
> He knows how to make trees without roots,
> And can describe primordial clouds;
> But now he paints only for the emperor,
> And won't spare his work for ordinary mortals.[62]

Cloudy Mountains (pl. 21) dates to the 1140s. By this time, "cloudy mountains" had become for Mi Yu-jen an auspicious symbol relating to the concept of good government.[63] In a colophon mounted on the scroll and dated 1200, Wang Chieh, a court painter under Emperor Ning-tsung (r. 1194–1224), who



Pl. 21. Mi Yu-jen (1074–1151). *Cloudy Mountains.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 10¾ x 22 7/16 in. (27.3 x 57 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.1)



owned the scroll, relates the story of how Mi would make paintings only for the emperor, whereupon the emperor would give them as gifts to his favorite courtiers. Though rich in ink tone and magisterial in presence, the painting seems strangely inert and static, reduced to an iconic image of mountains as ideographic forms and trees as rootless, forking branches.

In Mi Fu's *Coral Tree* (fig. 66), the reductive calligraphic brushwork, a distillation of ancient brush idioms, is neither an attempt to imitate nature nor a facile graphic simplification; rather, it dramatically expands the expressive potential of calligraphy by invoking its primordial oneness with painting. But in Mi Yu-jen's work, which developed in the tradition of the Mi family style, the elder Mi's impetuous brush idiom is codified and becomes a confining standard to be emulated. Mi Fu, in extolling archaic simplicity, perceived the understanding of ancient styles as a means to discovery and renewal. His gifted son, on the other hand, though seeming to follow the same path, made the knowledge of ancient styles a directive for submissive imitation. The highly individualistic style of a leading artist of the late Northern Sung was thus absorbed and, inevitably, subverted into a new orthodoxy.

1. See David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 22.
2. For a discussion of the use of this term, see James T. C. Liu and Peter J. Golas, eds., *Change in Sung China: Innovation or Renovation?* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1969), pp. 28, 96.
3. See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 27 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 26.
4. See James T. C. Liu, "Fan Chung-yen," in Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), vol. 1, p. 321.
5. See James T. C. Liu, *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021–1086) and His New Policies*, Harvard East Asian Studies, 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).
6. See David S. Nivison, "A Neo-Confucian Visionary: Ou-yang Hsiu," in Liu and Golas, *Change in Sung China*, pp. 74–78.
7. See Kuo Shao-yü, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing-shih* (History of Chinese Literary Criticism) (Shanghai: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1961), p. 156.
8. Ibid., p. 171.
9. See Hui-liang Chu, "The Chung Yu Tradition (A.D. 151–230): A Pivotal Development in Sung Calligraphy" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1990), pp. 60ff.
10. *Hsüan-ho shu-p'u* (Catalogue of the Imperial Calligraphy Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era; ca. 1120), in *Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan* (Taipei: I-wen Yin-shu-kuan, 1965), vol. 159, *chüan* 3, p. 3a.
11. See Tseng Yu-ho Ecke, *Chinese Calligraphy*, exhib. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1971), cat. no. 10.
12. See Kuo Mo-jo, "Yu Wang Hsieh mu-chi te ch'u-tu lun-tao *Lan-ting hsü* te chen-wei" (A Discussion of the Authenticity of the *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* Based on the Newly Discovered Epitaph of Wang Hsieh), *Wen-wu*, no. 6 (1965), pp. 1–33.
13. Discovered in the early seventeenth century, the *Spiritual Flight Sutra* (*Ling-fei ching*) was regarded as the finest extant example of T'ang dynasty small-size writing. It was copied and engraved in stone, the rubbings of which were widely used as the model or copy book for imperial civil examination candidates, whose handwriting style determined whether their examination papers were given a sympathetic reading. See Ch'i Kung, "Chi *Ling-fei ching* ssu-shih-san-hang pen" (On the Forty-three Columns from the *Spiritual Flight Sutra*), *I-yüan to-ying*, no. 34 (1987), p. 47.
14. For an interpretation of early T'ang calligraphy within its political and social context, see Stephen J. Goldberg, "Court Calligraphy of the Early T'ang Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae* 49, no. 3/4 (1988–89), pp. 189–237.
15. Su Shih, "Shu Wu Tao-tzu hua-hou" (Writing on a Painting by Wu Tao-tzu), in *Tung-p'o t'i-pa* (Colophons by Su Shih), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (Collected Works on Chinese Art) (Taipei: Shih-chieh Shu-chü, 1962), vol. 22, *chüan* 5, p. 95.
16. I am indebted to Hui-liang Chu for her excellent analysis of Li Kung-lin's calligraphy in her dissertation, "Chung Yu Tradition."
17. See Robert E. Harrist, Jr., "A Scholar's Landscape: *Shan-chuang t'u*, by Li Kung-lin" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1988).
18. Elizabeth Brotherton is preparing a Ph.D. dissertation, "Li Kung-lin and the Illustration of T'ao Ch'ien's *Returning Home*," for Princeton University.
19. Translated as "The Return" in James R. Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 268–70. See also Kang-i Sun Chang, *Six Dynasties Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 21–22.
20. See Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Sung Liao Chin hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Sung, Liao, and Chin Dynasties) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), p. 453.
21. See Chu Chien-hsin, *Chin-shih-hsüeh* (Study of Bronzes and Stones; preface dated 1938) (reprint, Taiwan: Commercial Press, 1968), pp. 21ff.; see also R. C. Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes on Sung Archaeology," *Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (February 1963), pp. 169–77; and Robert Poor, "Notes on the Sung Dynasty Archaeological Catalogs," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 19 (1965), pp. 33–44.
22. See Robert E. Harrist, Jr., "The Hermit of Lung-mien: A Biography of Li Kung-lin," in Richard M. Barnhart et al., *Li Kung-lin's "Classic of Filial Piety"* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, forthcoming).
23. In *Ch'un-hsi mi-ko hsü-t'ieh* (More Collected Calligraphic Works in the Private Ch'un-hsi Palace; dated 1185); see Huang Chien, "Ch'ien-liang huang-chin na-i-te—Chung Yu Chien Chi-chih piao mo-chi chao-p'ien chih fa-hsien" (One Could Not Have It for a Thousand Pieces of Gold—the Discovery of a Photograph of the Original Ink Manuscript of Chung Yu's *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih*), *Shu-p'u* 70, no. 3 (1986), pp. 22–27. For a study of the importance of the *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* to Ming calligraphy, see Christian F. Murck, "Chu Yun-ming (1461–1527) and Cultural Commitment in Su-chou," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978.
24. See Richard M. Barnhart, "Li Kung-lin's *Hsiao Ching t'u*, Illustrations of the *Classic of Filial Piety*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1967), pp. 140ff.
25. See Huang Chien, "Ch'ien-liang huang-chin na-i-te."

26. Huang T'ing-chien, "T'i Yen Lu-kung t'ieh" (Colophon on Yen Chen-ch'ing), in Huang, *Shan-ku t'i-pa* (Colophons by Huang T'ing-chien), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien*, vol. 22, *chüan* 4, p. 39.
27. For a detailed study of this scroll, see Shen C. Y. Fu, "Huang T'ing-chien's Calligraphy and His *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung*: A Masterpiece Written in Exile" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1976).
28. Huang T'ing-chien, "Tsai tz'u-yün Yang Ming-shu ssu-shou" (Four Poems Following the Rhymes of Yang Ming-shu), in Jen Yüan et al., eds., *Shan-ku shih chi-chu* (Annotated Collected Poems by Huang T'ing-chien) (Taipei: I-wen Yin-shu-kuan, 1969), vol. 2, *chüan* 12, p. 710; see also Kuo Shao-yü, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing-shih*, pp. 182–84.
29. See Huang T'ing-chien, "Pa yü Chang Tsai-hsi shu chuan-wei" (Colophon to Calligraphy for Chang Tsai-hsi) and "Pa *Hsiang-t'ieh* ch'ün-kung shu" (Colophon to Various Masters' Works in the Anthology *Hsiang-t'ieh*), in Huang, *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, in *I-shu ts'ung-pien*, vol. 22, *chüan* 5, pp. 49–51.
30. See Shen C. Y. Fu et al., *Traces of the Brush: Studies in Chinese Calligraphy*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1977), p. 83; and Kwan S. Wong, *Masterpieces of Sung and Yüan Dynasty Calligraphy from the John M. Crawford, Jr., Collection*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1981), pp. 24–28. Pardoned in 1100, Huang, in 1103, was again exiled, this time to Kwangsi, where he died in 1105.
31. See Fu et al., *Traces of the Brush*, p. 83.
32. See the transcription of the *Autobiographical Essay*, attributed to Huai-su, in the National Palace Museum (and National Central Museum), Taipei, *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* (The National Palace Museum Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1956), vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 29.
33. Huang T'ing-chien, "Pa Tz'u-chun-hsüan shih" (Colophon to Poems Written at Tz'u-chun-hsüan; dated 1099), in Huang, *Shan-ku t'i-pa*, in *I-shu ts'ung-pien*, vol. 22, *chüan* 8, p. 79.
34. *P'ei-wen-chai shu hua p'u*, compiled by Wang Yüan-ch'i et al. (Encyclopedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the P'ei-wen Studio; 1708) (reprint, Taipei: Hsin-hsing Shu-chü Yu-hsien Kung-ssu, 1972), vol. 1, *chüan* 5, p. 142.
35. See discussion in Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984), pp. 83–84.
36. Huang T'ing-chien, "Tseng Kao Tzu-mien ssu-chou" (Poems Presented to Kao Tzu-mien), in Jen Yüan et al., *Shan-ku shih chi-chu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 16, p. 881.
37. See Wai-kam Ho, "Mi Fei," in *Encyclopedia of World Art* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959–60), vol. 10, cols. 84–90.
38. Mi Fu, *Pao-chang tai-fang lu* (Catalogue of Precious Specimens of Calligraphy Visited), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (Collected Works on Chinese Art) (Taipei: Shih-chieh Shu-chü, 1966), part 1, vol. 2, pp. 11–36.
39. See discussion of Mi Fu's *Letters to Brother Lo* (*Lo-hsiung t'ieh*), dated 1095, in the Tokyo National Museum, in Fong et al., *Images of the Mind*, pp. 86, 88, 93 n. 53, fig. 81.
40. See Chang Ch'ou, *Ch'ing-ho shu-hua-fang* (The Painting and Calligraphy Barge at Ch'ing-ho; preface dated 1616) (reprint, Taipei: Hsüeh-hai Shu-chü, 1975), *chüan* 9.
41. See Ho Wei, *Ch'un-chu chi-wen* (Reports from a Spring Bank), in *Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan*, vol. 211, *chüan* 7, p. 8b.
42. Mi Fu, *Pao-Tsin Ying-kuang chi* (Collections of Treasuring the Tsin and the Brilliant Lights [Mi Fu's Studios]) (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü, 1971), *chüan* 8, p. 134; see rubbing of Mi's original essay illustrated in *Ch'ün-yü-t'ang* (Calligraphic Works in the Ch'ün-yü Studio), in *Shoseki meihin sōkan* 43 (1960), pp. 3–11, 16–59, 67. See discussion by Cheng Chin-fa, "Mi Fu Shu-ssu t'ieh" (Mi Fu's Writing on Shu Silk) (Master's thesis, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 1974).
43. Mi Fu, *Hai-yüeh ming-yen* (Famous Sayings of Mi Fu), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (1966), part 1, vol. 2, p. 1.
44. Mi Fu, *Hai-yüeh t'i-pa* (Colophons by Mi Fu), in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (1962), vol. 22, pp. 16–17.
45. See Lothar Ledderose, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 53.
46. Mi Fu, *Hai-yüeh ming-yen*, in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (1966), part 1, vol. 2, p. 3.
47. See Ma Tsung-huo, *Shu-lin tsao-chien* (Calligraphy Seen in an Elegant Mirror) (Taipei: Shang-wu Yin-shu-kuan, 1982), vol. 2, *chüan* 9, p. 226b.
48. See Nakata Yūjirō, *Beifutsu* (Mi Fu) (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1982), vol. 1, p. 254.
49. Mi Fu, *Hai-yüeh ming-yen*, in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (1966), part 1, vol. 2, p. 2.
50. Mi Fu, *Pao-Tsin Ying-kuang chi*, *chüan* 8, p. 133.
51. Mi Fu, *Hai-yüeh ming-yen*, in *I-shu ts'ung-pien* (1966), part 1, vol. 2, p. 3.
52. See Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi* (A Continuation of the History of Painting; preface dated 1167), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 2, pp. 5–6.
53. Ibid.
54. See *Tz'u-yüan*, *ssu* section, p. 137; see also the biography of Yüan Ts'an in Li Yen-shou, *Nan-shih* (History of the Southern Dynasties) (Beijing: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1975), *chüan* 26, pp. 702–7.

55. See Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, *Le Houa-che de Mi Fou* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. 79–80.
56. See Wu Sheng, *Ta-kuan lu* (Great Vista of Colophons; prefaces dated 1712), in *I-shu shang-chien hsüan-chen* (A Selective Collection of Books on the Appreciation of the Arts) (facsimile reprint, Taipei: Kuo-li Chung-yang T'u-shu-kuan, 1970), *chüan* 12, p. 67.
57. See Wen C. Fong, "*Rivers and Mountains After Snow* (*Chiang-shan hsüeh-chi*), Attributed to Wang Wei (A.D. 699–759)," *Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976–77), pp. 6–33, especially pp. 16 and 24.
58. Chao Hsi-ku, *Tung-t'ien ch'ing-lu chi* (Pure Happiness in a Taoist Cave), in *Tu-hua-chai ts'ung-shu* (Anthology of the Studio of Reading Paintings) (Taipei: I-wen Yin-shu-kuan, 1965), vol. 32, p. 37a; see also Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 27 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 116.
59. I have benefited from reading Peter C. Sturman's "Mi Youren and the Inherited Literati Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1989). See also Ogawa Hiromitsu, "The Relationship Between Landscape Representations and Self-Inscriptions in the Works of Mi Yu-jen," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 123–40.
60. See Bush, *Chinese Literati on Painting*, p. 44.
61. *Analects*, book 7, chap. 15; see James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (1893–95; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. 1, p. 64; also translated by Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 126.
62. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 3, p. 19.
63. See Sturman, "Mi Youren."



4 *Sung Imperial Art*

The rapid growth of commerce and trade and an urban culture in Sung China did not produce the kind of social and institutional change that later accompanied a similar economic and commercial revolution in Europe. Whereas in Europe this development stimulated the rise of a strong middle class and the growth of capitalism, in China the fading of the aristocracy and a weakened military resulted in the further concentration of power in the office of the emperor. The imperial government, with a power base supported by a conservative Neo-Confucian political ideology and a rigid intellectual syncretism of Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist philosophies, grew increasingly absolutist and repressive.

Because of the absence of a strong middle class, professionalism, in the modern sense of having a vocation, never developed in China.[1] As custodians of the "truth," the emperor and the imperial Painting Academy determined what should be painted. The professional artisans then carried out the dictates of the rulers. As a traditional craft, professional painting had a repertory of common subjects and techniques. Trained in the guild system, by which the craft was transmitted from master to disciple and from father to son, the professional painter learned the secrets of the trade in a collaborative workshop environment, copying from stencils and workshop models. By contrast, the amateur scholar-official artists, who subscribed to an anti-professional ideal and learned about painting by collecting and studying ancient masterworks, painted solely as a means of self-expression, for themselves and for their chosen circle of friends, maintaining with Su Shih that art was valid as an individualistic way of life and as a means of achieving the power of Tao.

The divergence between the professionals and the scholar-officials in Sung China points to what was a fundamental weakness in the imperial educational and bureaucratic systems. Scholar-officials followed a course of training based solely on the Confucian classics, a canon defined as all the books an educated person should know. But they lacked technical and specialized knowledge, and in fact shunned professional training. Despite this liability, they were charged with the running of the state, since the broad humanistic tradition on which their education was based was believed, as in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, to qualify them to uphold the moral values of civilized society. At the beginning of the twelfth century, Emperor Hui-tsung tried to promote the professionals, those who had been trained in practical skills, by admitting them into the scholar-official class. The attempt, however, failed, and the professionals continued to be treated as artisans.

Emperor Hui-tsung (1082–1135; r. 1100–25). Detail from *Finches and Bamboo* (pl. 22)

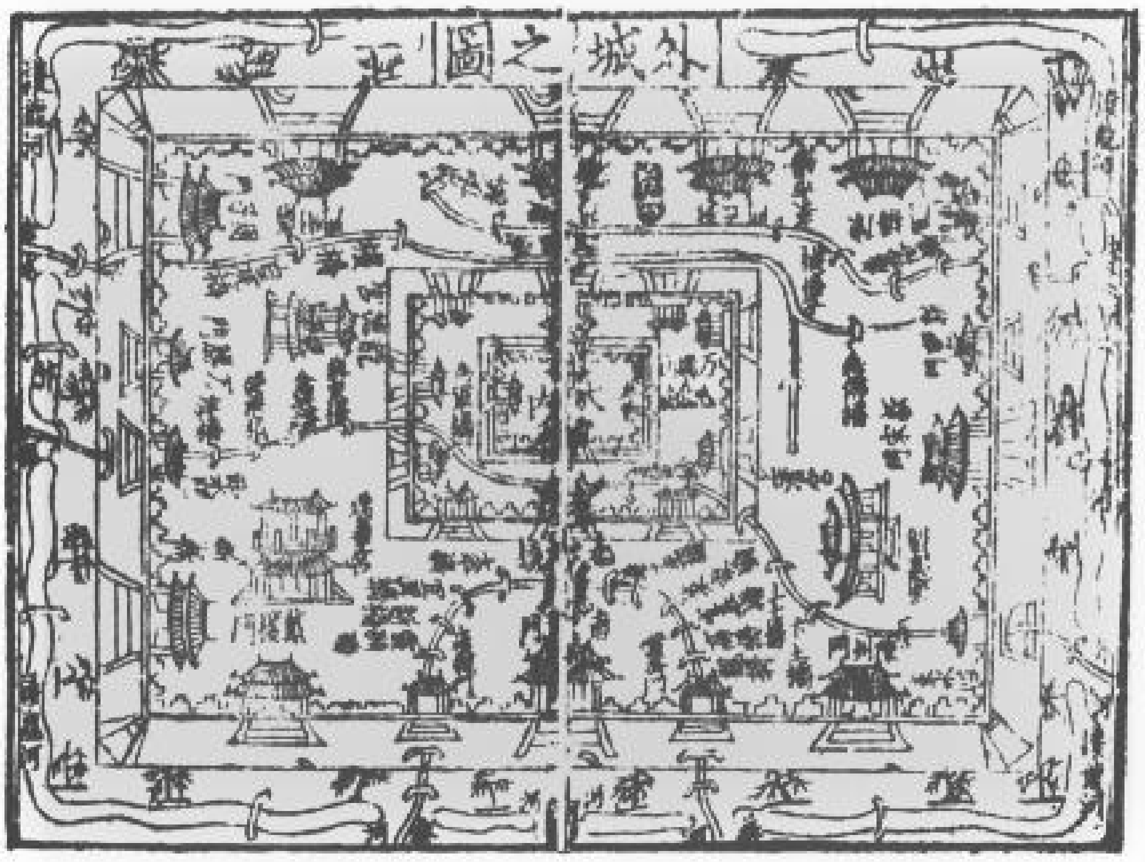


Fig. 74. *Diagram of the Northern Sung Imperial Capital, Pien-ching, showing the location of Wan-shou-shan*

The Artist-Emperor

The eleventh son of the emperor Shen-tsung, Hui-tsung (1082–1135; r. 1100–25) had no expectation of acceding to the throne, and was by nature far more interested in the arts and in occult Taoist alchemical experiments than in affairs of state. He proved to be a weak and ineffectual ruler, devoting most of his time to painting and calligraphy and to the reorganization of the imperial Painting Academy. Learning to write in the manner of Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105), he developed a distinctive personal calligraphic style, using fine, elegant brushstrokes, in what is known as the "slender gold" (*shou-chin*) style. He also studied with Wu Yüan-yü (active ca. 1080–1104), a leading painter of birds and flowers, and became himself a master of that genre.

Finding himself entirely unprepared as a ruler, Hui-tsung entrusted his authority to his personal confidants—Taoist priests of the occult, favorite councillors, and eunuchs and soothsayers. With the court's reform policies having netted additional state revenues, he spent lavishly, turning for ritual affirmation of his rule to architectural aggrandizement and miracle making.

Soon after ascending the throne, Hui-tsung was persuaded by a Taoist geomancer that the fortunes of the dynasty (and his own prospects of providing an heir) could be improved by raising the ground in the northeastern corner of the palace. A vast project was thus undertaken to construct, at the site of the old imperial park to the east of Pien-ching (fig. 74), a magic cosmic garden, Ken-yüeh, which would reproduce all the famous mountains and rivers of the world.[2] By creating and presiding over a miniature cosmos, the emperor was empowered to harness and control all of nature's energies and supernatural emanations.

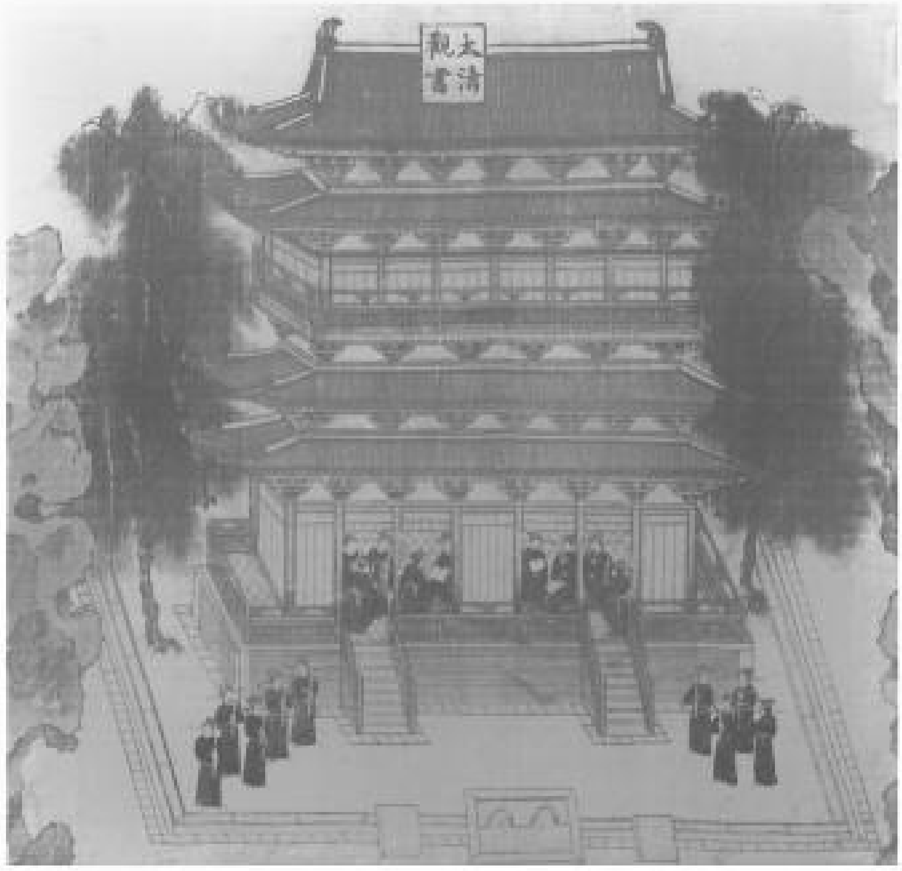


Fig. 75. Unidentified artist, 11th century. *Emperor Chen-tsung Viewing Books at the Great Purity Pavilion*, ca. 1007. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 13 x 99½ in. (33.1 x 252.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

To bolster the image of his rule, Hui-tsung had nine great ritual caldrons cast as new symbols of state; he created new court music with a "golden scale" and vastly enriched his art collections and expanded his palaces, garden complexes, and Taoist temples.[3] Rapacious imperial agents scoured the empire for fabulous art treasures, rare plants and rocks, and exotic birds and animals to inhabit the emperor's magic garden. The effect of this reckless extravagance was, however, disastrous, since to ship thousands of tons of garden rocks—some of them several stories high—from the Chiang-nan region to the capital, the entire grain transport system of the Grand Canal had to be appropriated, thus disrupting the country's economy and causing peasant uprisings.

The prime minister, Ts'ai Ching, left several accounts of life under the reign of Hui-tsung. They included glittering palace garden openings and poetry gatherings, the first of which, "exceeding anything ever seen in times of prosperity," took place on the eighth day of the third month of the year 1113.[4] On that day, favored courtiers were invited to tour the inner palace grounds and to participate in a noonday feast at the palace library, the Pavilion of Great Purity, the site of the last such palace opening, which had occurred a century earlier, in 1007, under Emperor Chen-tsung. *Emperor Chen-tsung Viewing Books at the Great Purity Pavilion* (fig. 75) shows that earlier occasion, at which Chen-tsung celebrated the completion of a new encyclopedia (totaling 24,192 volumes!).

On the morning of Hui-tsung's party in 1113, the emperor attended a court hearing at the Hall of Respectfulness (fig. 76, marked *a*). He then led his guests to a martial exercise and polo and archery games in front of the Hall of Lofty Governance (fig. 76, marked *b*). The games over and prizes

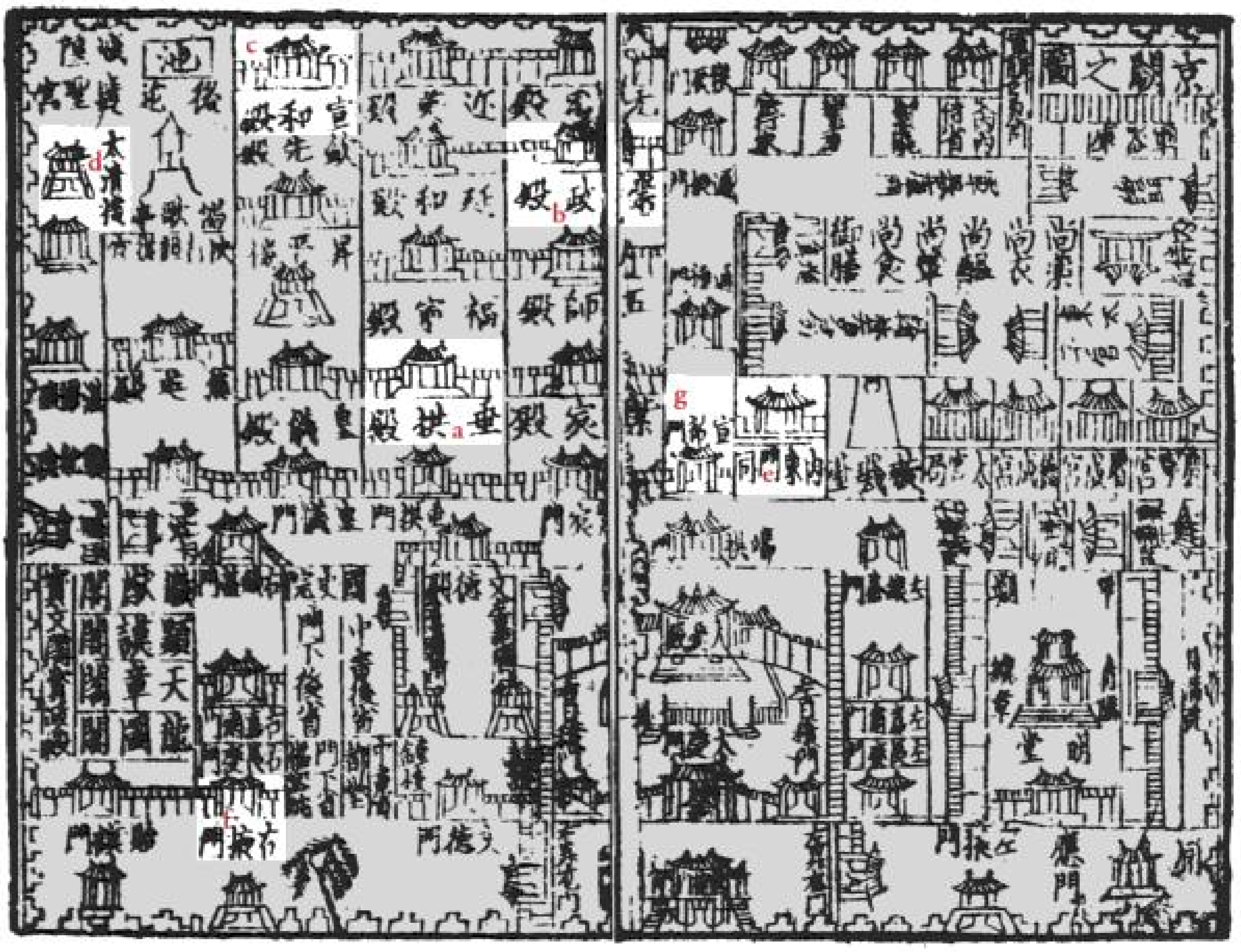


Fig. 76. *Diagram of the Northern Sung Imperial Palace Compound*

a. Hall of Respectfulness (Ch'ui-kung-tien)

b. Hall of Lofty Governance (Ch'ung-cheng-tien)

c. Hall of Spreading Harmony (Hsüan-ho-tien)

d. Pavilion of Great Purity (T'ai-ch'ing-lou)

e. Inner Eastern Gate (Nei-tung-men) or Eastern Gate (Tung-men)

f. Right Side Gate (Yu-yeh-men)

g. Gate of Spreading Blessing (Hsüan-yu-men)

awarded, they repaired to private gardens in the western quarter, where, at the Hall of Spreading Harmony (fig. 76, marked *c*), they viewed displays of rare books and antiquities. Ts'ai Ching described how the gardens surrounding the building were lavishly laid out, with elegant pavilions and fantastic rockeries and rare flowers. At high noon, palace eunuchs ushered the guests to their assigned seats in front of the Pavilion of Great Purity (fig. 76, marked *d*). A troupe of four hundred young female musicians assembled in the courtyard, while dancers performed on the terraces. At a signal, tea and wine were passed around and the toasting commenced. Recalling the great ritual feast held by King Hsüan of the Chou dynasty (r. 827–782 B.C.), Ts'ai Ching regaled the assembled company:

> How we imbibe in times of peace!
> Though drunk with wine, it is with goodness that we are filled;
> We are men of good conduct, scholars and gentlemen.
> Since times long past, thus have rulers rewarded their subjects
> With feasting and music.[5]

Several years later, in 1119, during another visit to the inner palace grounds, Ts'ai Ching found vastly expanded garden constructions, with dis-

plays of antiques filling enormous galleries, each of which was individually named: Investigating Antiquities, Steeped in Antiquities, Abiding in Antiquities, and so forth. On that occasion, accompanied by lilting strains of music, the emperor himself prepared tea, whipping up the tea powder in boiling water "until a milky foam filled the surface," and serving it with fresh litchis and oranges. And then, taking out some early writings by Ts'ai Ching that he had kept over the years, the emperor exchanged verses with his friends and reminisced about old times.[6]

Hui-tsung's most important contribution to art history was his *Catalogue of the Imperial Calligraphy Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era* (preface dated 1120), a record of his encyclopedic collection of paintings by two hundred thirty-one masters beginning in the Wei and Tsin dynasties (A.D. 220–420). The 6,396 scrolls are divided into ten categories: Taoist and Buddhist subjects, human figures, architecture, barbarian tribes, dragons and fish, landscapes, animals, flowers and birds, ink bamboo, and vegetables. While Hui-tsung did not change the traditional hierarchy of subjects, in which mythology, religion, and history were ranked above landscape and miscellaneous genres, his painting categories show how specialized painting had become under his patronage. The flower-and-bird section, which reflects the growing interest in the natural world, with a total of 2,786 scrolls, had the greatest number of works. At the heart of Hui-tsung's flower-and-bird still lifes is his attempt to extend his magic garden into painting. In them, Hui-tsung discovered the potential for recreating nature itself, thus transforming the popular genre into a major form of artistic expression.

The Painting Academy Under Emperor Hui-tsung

Bisected by a central avenue lined with a succession of gateways, the plan of the Northern Sung imperial palace compound, the Forbidden City (fig. 76), shows the outer court to the left and the inner court to the right. The official, more prestigious outer court, on the west side, comprised central government offices (the Department of State Affairs, the Secretariat, the Chancellery, and the Institute of Academicians) at the south end, audience halls in the middle, and the reigning emperor's private quarters at the north. The domestic inner court, on the east side, housed at the south end the ancestral temple, or Bright Hall (Ming-t'ang); at the north end were the offices and storage areas (for weapons, among other things); and in between were the heir apparent's palaces and the palace service quarters (for medical care, clothing, wine, carriages, food, and music). The outer court was run by government officials selected through the *chin-shih* examination system; the inner court, which ministered to the personal needs of the emperor and his family, was staffed by domestic service personnel under the supervision of the palace eunuchs.

Reflecting the rising social status of the painter from the end of the T'ang period, the Northern Sung Painting Service Bureau, also known as the

Painting Academy, from its inception had an identity problem: while the administration functioned as part of the inner court, those painters who had achieved distinction would have liked to have been accorded the status of being part of the scholar-official enclave of the outer court.[7] When first established in 984, the Painting Service Bureau was located in the palace service quarters in the inner court, "in the middle garden, behind the Inner Eastern Gate" (marked *e*). In 998, it was moved to the outer court, "outside the Right Side Gate," next to the Institute of Han-lin Academicians (marked *f*). The transfer signaled an effort to raise the status of the court painters to approximate that of the scholar-official academicians. But during the reign of Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85), it was moved back to its original location in the inner service court, "in the eastern corridor, behind the Gate of Spreading Blessing" (marked *g*), which implied a slipping of status for the painters.[8]

Until the twelfth century, members of the Painting Service Bureau were merely palace attendants under the direction of the palace eunuchs. In order to raise the status of all those who had been trained in specialized fields to that of scholar-official, Emperor Hui-tsung in 1104–5 created four new institutes—for medicine, mathematics, calligraphy, and painting—at the imperial Han-lin College, or National University. Students at the Institute of Painting were divided into two categories, the "scholars" (*shih-liu*) and the "professional artisans" (*tsa-liu*). A scholar-painter pursued an academic degree program with examinations in the classics fashioned after those of the *chin-shih* degree and, upon graduating, was awarded a civil rank as a scholar-official and became a member of the faculty at the Institute. A professional artisan, on the other hand, would join the old Painting Service Bureau of the inner court, would be given an honorary title of military guard, and would serve under the direction of palace eunuchs. But the experiment failed because the scholars, upon attaining civil rank, found themselves unprepared for regular bureaucratic assignments as government officials, while positions in the Painting Service Bureau were now being filled entirely by professional artisans. In 1110, the Institute of Painting at the National University (along with the Institutes of Medicine, Mathematics, and Calligraphy) was abolished and reconverted to the old Painting Academy.

Nevertheless, Hui-tsung continued his protection of the court painters, ensuring that they received preferential treatment. According to Teng Ch'un, in his *Continuation of the History of Painting* (preface dated 1167):

> By the [Sung] dynasty's old regulations, artists who attained official rank were permitted to wear purple robes [of the fifth grade] but not the fish-shaped pouches. During the Cheng-ho and Hsüan-ho eras [1111–25], special permission was given members of the Calligraphy and Painting Academies to wear the fish pouches. This was deemed an exceptional honor. When the artists-in-waiting stood in attendance, members of the Painting Academy were placed at the head, members of the Calligraphy Academy came next, and members of the Zither and Chess Academies, and jade and all other artisans followed in the rear. If an apprentice in

the Painting Academy committed a wrongdoing, he was punished by law; crimes of a serious nature were dealt with by the emperor himself. And while artisans were paid by day wages, called food money, members of the [Painting and Calligraphy Academies] were given salaries, awarded according to their grades. They were not treated as ordinary artisans.[9]

Although Hui-tsung's attempted reform did not result in any lasting change for the Academy painters, he did succeed in introducing an academic program of what today we would call a liberal arts education to the training of court painters, many of whom probably had started out as uneducated artisans from painting guilds and workshops in the provinces. As Teng Ch'un tells us, "When [Hui-tsung's] Painting Academy started recruiting, painters came from all over, but many could not fit in and so left. At that time, everyone specialized in form-likeness. Those who were independent by nature were often undisciplined, and they could not follow the [Academy's] requirements."[10] But Hui-tsung wanted more than dazzling technique; he aspired to a deeper, transcendent realism, gained through the careful study of the principles of nature. The exacting style and rigorous standards of the Academy expressed a high purpose. Indeed, the meticulous attention paid to the natural world found a striking parallel in the Neo-Confucian rationalist approach to learning, which asserted that "the [objective] investigation of things leads to the extension of knowledge."[11]

Students at the Institute of Painting specialized in one of six areas: Buddhist and Taoist themes, human figures, landscape, birds and animals, flowers and bamboo, or architecture. Both naturalism and the study of ancient models were held as criteria for excellence. Those students were given the highest grades who created original compositions and whose renderings of subjects reflected an understanding of both nature and archaic forms. Those students were ranked second who modeled their subjects after ancient examples and were at the same time true to nature, while those receiving only passing grades were considered mere copyists.[12]

In addition to encouraging the study of ancient models, the Painting Academy emphasized the visual representation of poetic ideas (*shih-i*) in painting. Students were required in competitions to make illustrations for lines of poetry. In these competitions, imagination and evocation were prized over literalness and realistic detail. Teng Ch'un, for example, wrote:

One examination topic consists of two lines of poetry:

Over the wilderness water no passenger is crossing,
A lonely skiff lies idly by itself.

While most painters depicted an empty boat tied to the shore, with either an egret resting on the side or crows nesting on the back of the awning, [one painter] had a different approach. He painted a boatman lying at the back of the boat, playing a lonely tune on his flute. What he showed was not that there was no boatman, but that there was no passenger, which implied that the boatman had nothing to do.[13]

Overleaf
Pl. 22. Emperor Hui-tsung (1082–1135; r. 1100–25). *Finches and Bamboo.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 11 x 18 in. (27.9 x 45.7 cm). John M. Crawford, Jr. Collection, Purchase, Douglas Dillon Gift, 1981 (1981.278)







Fig. 77. *Revised Pharmacopoeia of the Cheng-ho Era*, dated 1116. Detail, Chapter 9, p. 41

Birds, Bamboo, and Fish: Magic Realism

Finches and Bamboo (pl. 22), a short handscroll in colors on silk signed with Hui-tsung's cipher, exemplifies the emperor's fastidious taste and the new Hsüan-ho (reign title for the years 1119–25) style of the imperial Painting Academy. The painting depicts the private world of two birds perched on sprays of bamboo on a bright spring morning. The bamboo leaves, their tips singed by the harsh winter, have just regained their jade-green luster; pink tendrils sprout from each branch. The sleek male finch, poised delicately on the swaying lower branch, his tail and wing tips pulled back, sings to the female above, as coquettishly she looks away. In its depiction of growth and change, the painting communicates the workings of the natural cosmos. Although the birds, the bamboo, the rock, and the draping fern are all drawn in conventional form types and brush patterns, the brushwork is infused with exceptional vitality, reflecting Hui-tsung's training as a calligrapher. The composition shows carefully balanced shapes and rhythms and sensitively delineated solids and voids. With bamboo stalks and rock outlines crisscrossing the picture surface, the composition similarly is informed by a calligraphic sensibility: the bold cipher on the right, while serving to fill and activate the semicircular outline of the overhang, also effectively sums up the basic rhythms of the pictorial design.

Manicured and artificial, the image is the enchanted vision of a sequestered ruler in retreat from a troubled world. In this and other works, we can detect the influence of occult Taoism:



Fig. 78. Ts'ui Po (active ca. 1060–85). *Magpies and Hare*, dated 1061. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 76⅛ x 40⅝ in. (193.7 x 103.4 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

> Where the essences of the Five Elements, pure and unadulterated, are concentrated in certain places between Heaven and Earth, a single inhalation of the yin and yang will cause [life] to spread out in its full glory. . . . When painting achieves subtlety, a feeling of exhilaration similar to that in poetry will emanate from the subject.[14]

While emphasizing the poetry of life and the senses in his works, Hui-tsung, an occult Taoist, also saw his painting as functionally "real" and having magical properties, an attribute reflected in his use of intense colors. The bamboo leaves, for example, are executed in a brilliant malachite green, and in keeping with the ancient belief that the eyes are the locus of spiritual powers, the birds' eyes are made three-dimensional by the addition of two spots of shiny raw black lacquer, which serve to heighten the effect of magical vitality. The



Pl. 23. Attributed to Chao K'o-hsiung (early 12th century). *Fish at Play.* Album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 8⅞ x 9⅞ in. (22.5 x 25.1 cm). John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.100.110)



painter's choice of colors was determined not by nature alone, but by his own emotional response to the subject, which in turn determined the psychological impact of the image on the viewer.

The Northern Sung period saw an increasing interest in the natural world, as seen in the proliferation of major treatises classifying plants, birds, and stones. Ts'ai Hsiang (1012–1067), a well-known calligrapher, compiled, before 1059, the *Book of Litchis*, in which he described thirty-two different kinds of litchi nuts. And an extensive pharmacopoeia, which listed herbs and medicines, was published in 1116 (fig. 77). Numerous anecdotes attest to Hui-tsung's keen observation of even the most minute details of natural life. Once he criticized a painter who depicted one of his peacocks climbing with its right leg lifted, for in fact that particular peacock always lifted its left leg while climbing. On another occasion, he sang the praises of a young apprentice for painting the branch of a rose. When asked why, he explained, "Few men can paint this [particular variety of] rose properly, for depending upon the season and time of day, its flowers and leaves grow differently. This painting describes the flower on a spring day at high noon, and is accurate in every detail. The painter must be handsomely rewarded."[15]

Hui-tsung in his pleasure gardens spent long hours and days studying and painting his rare birds and flowers. He made hundreds of paintings for the *Hsüan-ho Albums of Perceptive Viewing*, in which are depicted rare plants and exotic birds and animals with commentary on their origins and characteristics, as well as poems and colophons.[16] Hui-tsung's "perceptive viewing," as seen in *Finches and Bamboo*, represents a new, intensive realism with a narrowed focus. While early Northern Sung monumental landscape opened up the viewer's space, inviting him to step into a vast, infinitely expanding world of nature, Hui-tsung in his album paintings created a new, objectified microcosm, in which neatly arranged flowers and birds, defined and framed by the four borders of the picture, live in a space that is discrete, and separate from that of the viewer.

If we compare Hui-tsung's *Finches and Bamboo* with *Magpies and Hare* (fig. 78), dated 1061, a bird-and-animal painting by Ts'ui Po (active ca. 1060–85), a contemporary of Kuo Hsi, we can begin to understand Hui-tsung's dislike of this style. Ts'ui Po's hare and magpies appear in a naturalistically rendered windswept landscape much like the landscapes of Kuo Hsi (pl. 11). As an autumnal gust of wind whips through bamboo and grasses, a hare abruptly turns its head in anxious response to the searing cries of the agitated magpies. Hui-tsung's birds are by contrast quiescent, even static. Instead of an emotion-filled representation of a dynamic and changing nature, Hui-tsung's vision is of a natural world that is harmonious and arranged.

Fish at Play (pl. 23), attributed to the early twelfth-century painter Chao K'o-hsiung, is another representative work of the Academy. During the reign of Hui-tsung, the cultivation of rare aquarium fish came into vogue, and playful, splashing fish in flora-filled waters became a popular subject. In the Hsüan-ho catalogue, the author of the essay "Fishes and Dragons" decries still-life

representations of fish as "objects on a kitchen table" but praises pictures of fish that "play in the wide expanse and dive in the deep."[17] In *Fish at Play*, where six slim, lissome fish flip and weave through the grasses, the painter's genius for suggesting life and movement by the graceful deployment of elegant curving lines is fully in evidence. Flawlessly executed, Chao K'o-hsiung's *Fish at Play* is at once a metaphor for and a re-creation of natural life at its freest and most spontaneous.

The Chin Invasion

The Jurchen tribes in the northeast of Manchuria came into China early in the twelfth century and adopted the Chinese dynastic name of Chin (meaning "gold") in 1115. Allying themselves with the Sung, who were intent on regaining the sixteen prefectures lost to the Khitan Liao two centuries earlier, the Jurchen Chin hordes overwhelmed the Liao by 1125. The destruction of the Liao, however, became a Pyrrhic victory for the Sung when the Chin army went on to capture the Sung capital, Pien-ching, in 1126, destroying what has come to be known as the Northern Sung.

Mission for Negotiating Northern Boundaries with the Chin (pl. 24), a commemorative narrative in a landscape setting by an anonymous early twelfth-century painter, done not long before the Chin invasion of the Northern Sung, shows a northern landscape style that was later abandoned by the expatriate Southern Sung Academy painters after their migration to the south. Against the background of a bleak and forbidding north China mountain range, beside a roadside pavilion under a group of tall pine trees, four high Sung officials mounted on horseback (pl. 24a) are seen with Chin messengers, one of whom rides away carrying a roll of official documents on his back. The modern scholar Chiang I-han has identified the scene as the negotiated return of the six northern border prefectures to the Northern Sung by the Chin in 1123: the four mounted officials are Chao Liang-ssu, Yao P'ing-chung, K'ang Sui, and Wang Kuei, and the location appears to be the Pine Pavilion Pass at Ching-chou, Hopei Province.[18]

The use of tall foreground trees against a backdrop of towering mountain peaks recalls the late Northern Sung Academy painter Li T'ang's *Wind in the Pines amid Ten Thousand Valleys*, dated 1124 (fig. 79), while the mountain's texture pattern, a combination of "raindrop" dots and thin hatching strokes, shows the influence of Fan K'uan, Yen Wen-kuei, and Li T'ang. Also typical of the illusionistic structure of landscape painting of the early twelfth century is the piling up of the mountains on the picture plane, with their bases disappearing into veils of mist. The combination of tall foreground trees with tall background peaks continued to be popular with later northern landscape painters under the Chin. It is seen, for example, in an early thirteenth-century Chin landscape handscroll by Li Shan, *Wind and Snow in the Fir-Pines* (fig. 80), in which the texture pattern also shows a combination of dots and parallel modeling strokes quite unlike anything in the south at this time.



Pl. 24. Unidentified artist (early 12th century). *Mission for Negotiating Northern Boundaries with the Chin*, ca. 1123. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10½ x 56⅛ in. (26.7 x 152.5 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.1.1)



Fig. 79. Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s). *Wind in the Pines amid Ten Thousand Valleys*, dated 1124. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 74⅛ x 55 in. (188.7 x 139.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



Overleaf
Pl. 24a. Detail, pl. 24

The first half of the large handscroll *Six Horses* (pl. 25) is by an unidentified late twelfth- or thirteenth-century northern painter under the Chin[19] who shared the same Northern Sung artistic heritage as his Southern Sung contemporaries but developed it differently. The painting, which depicts nomads and their horses at a water hole, seems to owe its brushwork to techniques used by professional monumental wall painters; there is an unself-conscious, rough vigor in its drawing not usually encountered in scroll paintings. Although the drawing of the horses benefits from the linear formulation of Li Kung-lin (fig. 81), the brushlines are used, along with shading and colors, to achieve representational realism, which is the opposite of what Li, the scholar-official painter, wished to achieve. In depicting the nomadic tribe, the painting shows a sympathetic familiarity with the subject that seems alien to Southern Sung art. The robust figures of the steppes, one holding a falcon and two others attending to horses, are presented as three-dimensionally modeled images

Fig. 80. Li Shan (active early 13th century). *Wind and Snow in the Fir-Pines*. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 11 11/16 x 31 3/16 in. (29.7 x 79.2 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (61.34)









following in the monumental figural tradition of the north, as seen in the early eighth-century wall paintings of the T'ang prince Chang-huai (died 684; fig. 82). The intensely realistic, portraitlike faces also compare closely with those seen in *Lady Wen-chi's Return to Han* (fig. 83), by the early thirteenth-century Chin painter Chang Yü.

Pl. 25. Unidentified artists (first half of scroll, late 12th or 13th century; second half of scroll, 14th century). *Six Horses*. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 18½ x 65¾ in. (47 x 167 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.5)



Fig. 81. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *Five Tribute Horses*, datable to 1090. Detail, "The Fifth Groom and Horse." Handscroll, ink on paper. Present location unknown, formerly in Kikuchi and Yamamoto Teijiro Collections, Japan

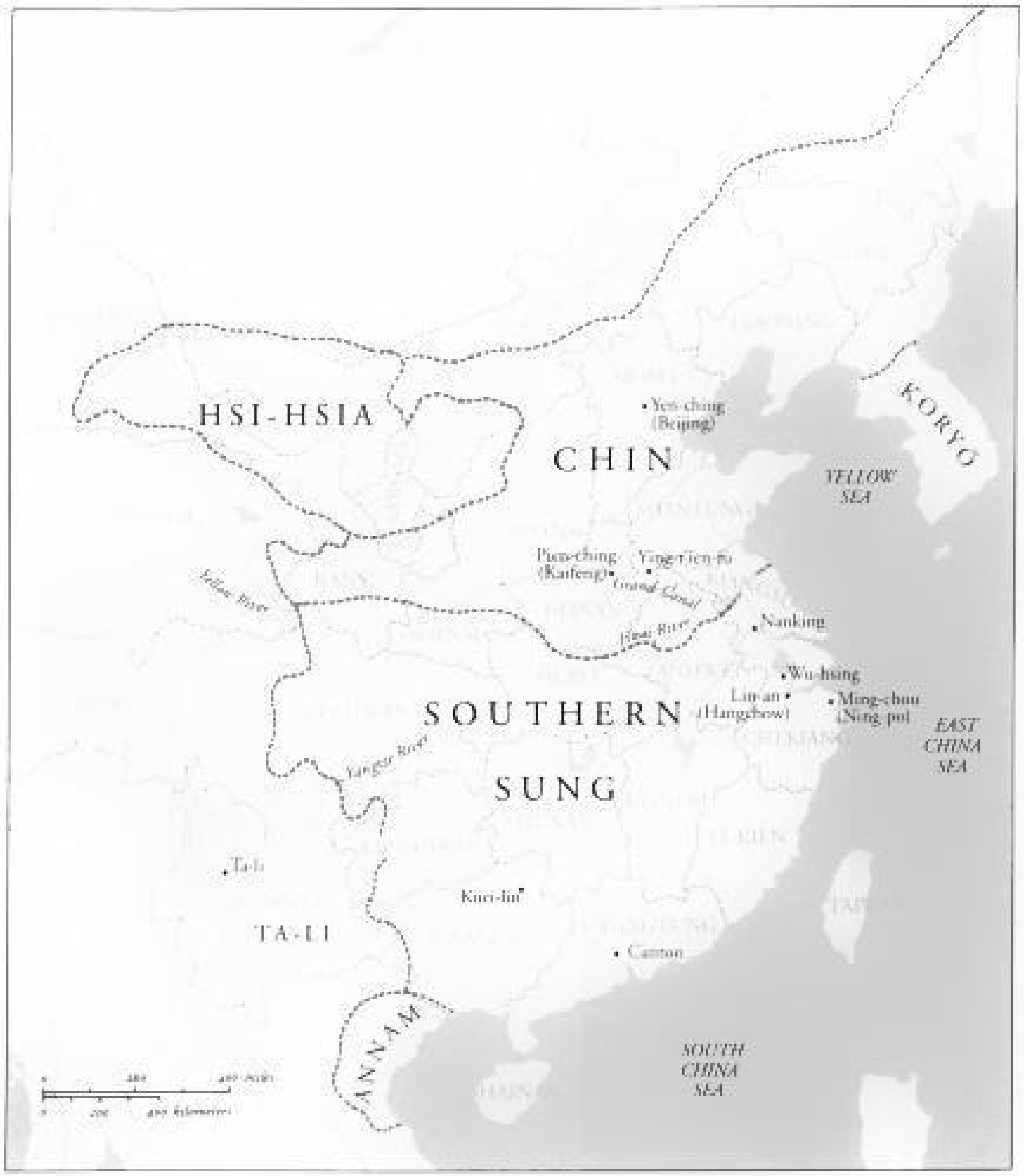


Fig. 82. *Officials Receiving Foreign Guests*, T'ang dynasty, ca. 711. Detail from a wall painting from the tomb of Li Hsien, Prince Chang-huai (654–684; posthumously reinterred and elevated to the rank of crown prince, ca. 711), Ch'ien-hsien, Shensi Province, ink and color. Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian



Fig. 83. Chang Yü (active early 13th century). *Lady Wen-chi's Return to Han.* Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, $11\frac{7}{16}$ x 50 in. (29 x 127 cm). Jilin Provincial Museum, Ch'ang-ch'un





Map 3. Political Boundaries of the Southern Sung Dynasty, ca. 1140

The Dynastic Revival

Confronted by the Chin invasion, Emperor Hui-tsung abdicated in favor of his son Ch'in-tsung. After sacking Pien-ching, the Chin in 1127 took with them to the north both Hui-tsung and Ch'in-tsung, more than three thousand members of the imperial clan, and all the Academy artists, court artisans, and workmen they could round up, thus ending the rule of the Northern Sung.

Prince K'ang, the ninth son of Hui-tsung, however, managed to escape, eventually staved off the invasion, and re-established a government from the northern banks of the Yangtze River to all areas in the south. This was the Southern Sung. Following the abduction of his father and brother, Prince K'ang was proclaimed Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62) at the southern capital, Ying-t'ien-fu, in Honan Province. With the Chin in pursuit, Kao-tsung and his court in exile retreated steadily south, crossing the Yangtze and stopping briefly in Chien-k'ang. Intent on capturing the emperor, the Chin cavalry took Hangchow and Ning-po, chasing Kao-tsung to the sea. The for-

tunes of the Sung finally turned in early 1130, when a decisive victory was scored at Jun-chou and other points, driving the Chin back to the north side of the Yangtze (Map 3).

The reconstruction of the Southern Sung under Kao-tsung began in 1131, when a new reign era, Shao-hsing ("Reviving Prosperity"; 1131–62), was proclaimed. In early 1132, Kao-tsung brought his court to Lin-an ("Temporary Peace"), which he designated officially as the capital in 1138. During the early 1130s, Kao-tsung's reign remained extremely precarious. In 1129, a near disaster occurred when two of his generals mutinied. Also in 1129, Liu Yü (r. 1129–37) was set up by the Chin as a puppet emperor of Ch'i in the Central Plains, and bandits and local militia occupied much of the south, in areas beyond Kao-tsung's control. The emperor also faced the daunting task of legitimizing his rule, a task hardly facilitated by the fact that his brother, the rightful emperor Ch'in-tsung, was alive in captivity. (He did not die until 1161.) Kao-tsung's one claim to the throne was his Sung family lineage, but having lost the old Sung capital, he did not even have access to the ancestral tombs. As his overriding preoccupation was self-preservation, he avoided military confrontation with the Chin at any cost. The only condition of his peace negotiations with the Chin was the return of his mother—to legitimize his rule—and the mortal remains of Hui-tsung. This objective was finally realized in 1142.[20]

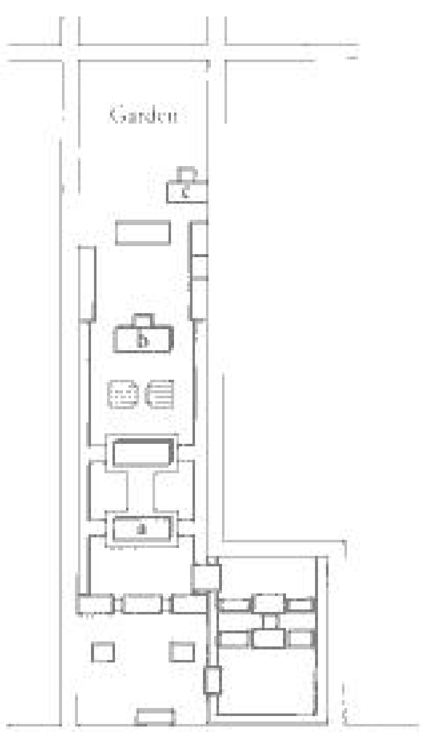


Fig. 84. *Diagram of the Southern Sung Imperial Library Complex*

a. Right Civil Hall (Yu-wen-tien)

b. Hall of the Mountain of the Tao (Tao-shan-t'ang)

c. Writer's Pavilion (Chu-tso-t'ing)

Lin-an in the late 1130s saw the rise of a glittering new imperial city (Map 4, page 249). In 1143, at the completion of the new palace library complex, Kao-tsung held a palace opening similar to those Hui-tsung had held a quarter of a century earlier. He rode his palanquin to the Right Civil Hall (fig. 84, marked *a*); at the main library building, the Hall of the Mountain of the Tao (marked *b*), he displayed for the heir apparent and attending ministers "imperial writings and works of art by former rulers, masterworks of calligraphy and painting from the Tsin and T'ang dynasties, and antique ritual vessels from the Three Dynasties period."[21] The celebration ended with a feast at the Right Civil Hall. Some years later, in 1178, Kao-tsung's successor, Emperor Hsiao-tsung, would repeat the occasion in the same buildings.[22]

By the 1140s, Kao-tsung had embarked on a major cultural program of Sung revival. One great resource for legitimation to which the emperor turned with increasing energy in the 1140s and 1150s was sponsorship of the arts, along with the restoration of artistic institutions and the rebuilding of the imperial art collections.[23] After the reestablishment of the National University in 1143, the Calligraphy and Painting Academies were reinstated in 1146 with the appointment of several original members of Hui-tsung's Academy who had found their way to Lin-an.[24]

Among the projects sponsored by Kao-tsung's revival movement was a series of historical and symbolic narrative paintings. These are exemplified by *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State* (pls. 26a–h), an unsigned work datable to the early 1140s. The story of Prince Ch'ung-erh, the future Duke Wen of Chin (modern Shansi Province), dates to the Eastern Chou period (771–256 B.C.).



Pls. 26a–h. Attributed to Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s). *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*, early 1140s. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 11⅝ x 325⅝ in. (29.5 x 827 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.2)

Pl. 26a. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Duke Hsiang of Sung Making a Gift of Horses"

In 656 B.C., Ch'ung-erh, a younger son of the old Duke of Chin, was forced by family disputes over the question of succession to go into exile. After first spending twelve years in tribal Ti country in western Shansi, he returned east through Wei and remained for seven more years in the state of Ch'i, in Shantung. Finally, in 637 B.C., he headed for home. His journey took him west and south through the states of Ts'ao, Sung, Cheng, and Ch'u, in the Yangtze River valley, and then back north across Ch'in in Shensi. Returning to Chin in 636 B.C., he became, as Duke Wen, the powerful leader of all the feudal princes in central China, building his state into an effective bulwark against the outer states of Ch'in and Ch'u.

The saga of Duke Wen of Chin exemplifies the classic story of dynastic revival, which had a special significance during the reign of Kao-tsung. Like Ch'ung-erh, Kao-tsung started life as a minor prince, and in 1126 he was twice sent north as a hostage of the Jurchen Chin. When he was installed in 1127, the dowager empress Yüan-yu published a decree in support of the new emperor, and there she explicitly compared Kao-tsung to Duke Wen:

> When ill fortune descended on the House of Han in its tenth generation, it was Emperor Kuang-wu [r. 25–57] who brought about a dynastic revival. Similarly, of the nine sons of Duke Hsien [of Chin], Ch'ung-erh was the only one who survived. Such is the wish of Heaven; how could it be planned by men?[25]

The painted narratives illustrate what Kao-tsung regarded as the principal attributes of rulership: leadership among allies, forbearance in humiliation, defiance in defeat, vigilance in security, loyalty in friendship, and magnanimity in victory. And indeed, Kao-tsung read and reread the story of Prince Ch'ung-erh



time and again as he struggled to survive his many adversities and re-establish his empire.

Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State, which appears to be one of a pair of scrolls,[16] chronicles, in a series of six dramatically contrasting encounters, the duke's return journey to Chin in 636 B.C. After the collapse of the Western Chou in 771 B.C., the feudal principalities of central China were held together as a kind of loose confederation under the leadership of a *pa*, or hegemonic prince. During his odyssey, Ch'ung-erh, a potential ruler and thus regarded as an important personage, was royally received by the powerful ruler of Ch'i in Shantung, then the acknowledged *pa*, and the Duke of Sung in Honan. He was, however, rudely ignored by the weaker princes of Wei, Ts'ao, and Cheng.

The first scene (pl. 26a) shows the head of the Sung in cordial conversation with the peripatetic prince, while teams of horses are brought into the courtyard for presentation. The second scene (pl. 26b), by contrast, depicts the arrogant Earl of Cheng standing rigidly before his guest, here unwelcome, who hastily takes his leave. At the right, Ch'ung-erh is shown angrily riding away in his carriage, his attendants, briskly following, flipping back their long sleeves in a gesture of disgust.

In the second pair of illustrations, Ch'ung-erh's triumphant procession through the state of Ch'u is contrasted with a tranquil domestic scene in Ch'in. In their departure from Ch'u (pl. 26c), the brave Chin warriors in exile, their morale boosted by having withstood the insults of the Ch'u, march in triumphant procession, banners flying, through billowing clouds and jagged boulders. The prince himself, in the last of the three visible carriages, is seen immersed in thought. Arriving in Ch'in, Ch'ung-erh is presented with five young maidens to attend him (pl. 26d). After the threat of confrontation in



Pl. 26b. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Visit to the State of Cheng"



Pl. 26c. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Departure from the State of Ch'u"


及宋宋襄公贈之以馬二十乘





Pl. 26d. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Received by the Ladies of Ch'in"



Pl. 26e. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Tzu-fan Presenting a Jade Disk"







Pl. 26f. *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State.* Detail, "Triumphant Return to Chin"

the militant state of Ch'u, the inviting domestic scene in Ch'in is perhaps a ploy to prevent the prince from returning home.

The last two scenes show a private moment of personal drama between Ch'ung-erh and one of his followers and his formal, triumphant installation as the ruler of Chin. On the eve of the prince's return, just before crossing the Yellow River, Tzu-fan, one of his faithful followers, berates himself for his failures and asks that he be relieved of his duties. He presents the prince with a jade disk as a symbol of his loyalty, whereupon the prince dramatically tosses the disk into the river, declaring, "If ever my heart harbors suspicion, may I course down the river with these waters!" The scene (pl. 26e), an emotional moment of the reaffirmation of trust between a master and his subject, takes place under the magnificent canopy of a spreading pine tree. At the left, preparations are made to ferry horses and carriages across the river. In the final scene (pl. 26f), the crowned ruler is shown in full regalia seated in his chariot of state. Flanked by his ministers, who bear ceremonial staffs and the symbolic seals and vessels of state, Duke Wen prepares to reenter the palace gates.

Although the scroll is not signed, it has traditionally been attributed to Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s), a former member of Hui-tsung's Painting Academy recently returned from captivity in the north and now a leader of the reconstituted Southern Sung Painting Academy. The calligraphy (fig. 85), a transcription of the story of Ch'ung-erh by Tso-ch'iu Ming (active ca. 274 B.C.), appears to be by Emperor Kao-tsung himself; it is natural and spontaneous, rather than a lifeless imitation or copy by a palace scribe. Kao-tsung's early calligraphy, as seen in the rubbing of a stele dated 1133 (fig. 86), follows the style of the late Northern Sung master Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). In the calligraphy for *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*, he continues in the Huang manner, using a relaxed small running script, with oblong characters and

Overleaf
Pl. 26g. Detail, pl. 26c



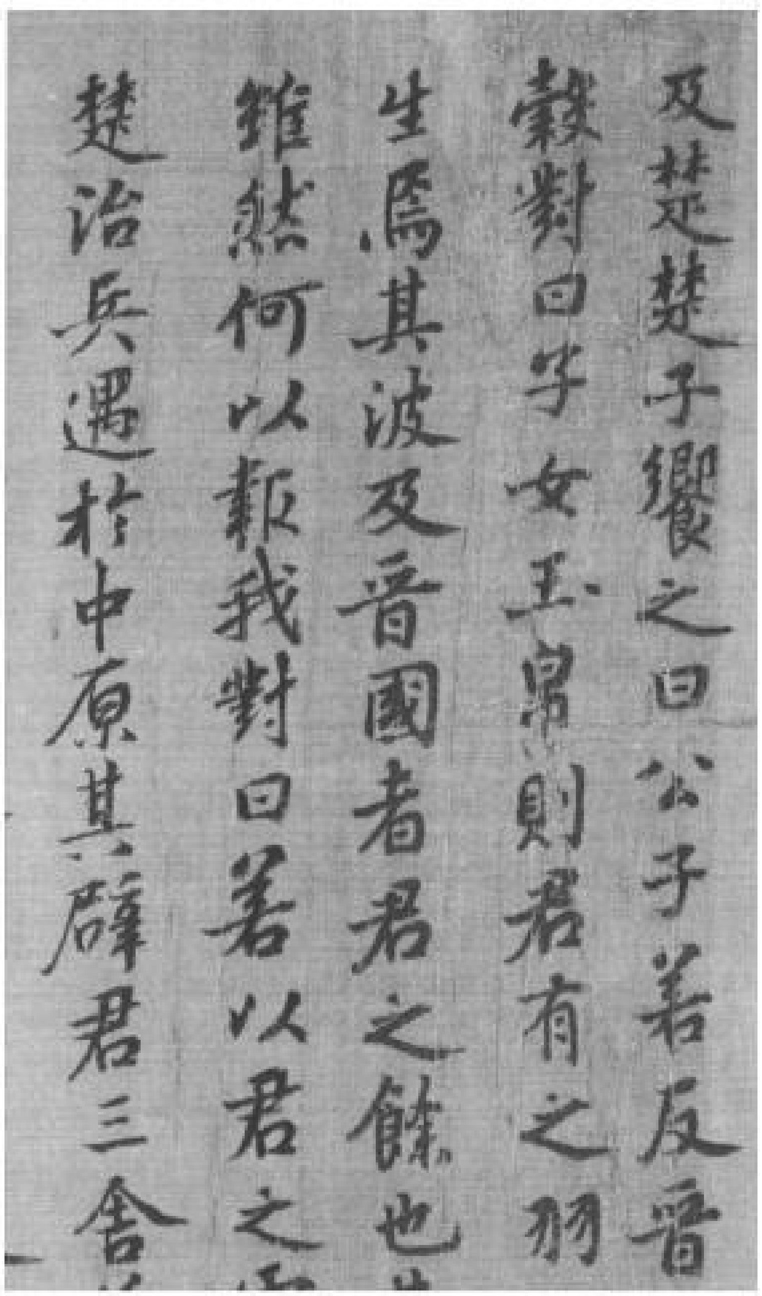
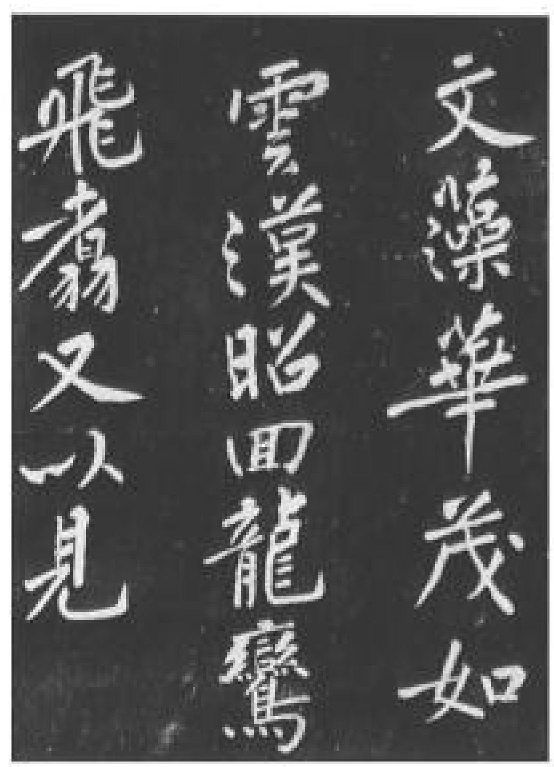


Fig. 85. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). Inscription on pl. 26c

Fig. 86. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Stele of the Pagoda of the Buddha's Brilliant Halo*, dated 1133. Rubbing, 69 x 34 in. (175 x 86.4 cm). Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo









exaggerated diagonal strokes; it compares closely not only with the dated rubbing of 1133 but also with a series of original letters from the emperor to his minister Liang Ju-chia dated 1135, 1141, and 1143 respectively.[27] The authentication of Kao-tsung's calligraphy on the scroll argues convincingly that the accompanying painting is the work of the emperor's favorite court painter, Li T'ang.

A native of Honan, Li T'ang almost single-handedly led the change in Academy landscape painting from the Northern Sung monumental style to the intimate Southern Sung "one-corner" composition.[28] By the early twelfth century, under the rule of Hui-tsung, the extravagantly atmospheric landscape style of Kuo Hsi (fig. 32 and pl. 11) had lost favor. In his *Wind in the Pines amid Ten Thousand Valleys,* dated 1124 (fig. 79), Li T'ang had used a severe, tactile treatment of the mountain surface reminiscent of the work of Fan K'uan (fig. 30); Fan's pointillistic technique has been enlarged to a broad, angular stroke, known as the "ax-cut" (*fu-p'i*), which effectively describes the rugged, chipped-off facets of the rock surface. In *Duke Wen of Chin* (pl. 26g), however, Li T'ang combines ax-cut strokes with the softly rubbed texture idiom of Kuo Hsi to represent the loess-deposited, deeply eroded rounded boulders of the north.

Li T'ang displays two principal tenets of Sung Academy painting: the painting style is calligraphic in expression and it draws as much on forms developed by the old masters as from nature. The drawings of human figures and horses (pl. 26h), characteristic of the elegant line of the Southern Sung Academy painters, show the influence of Li Kung-lin's plain drawing technique. In marked contrast to the more typical heavily colored and decorative paintings by professional artisans, such as *Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Flight to Shu* (pl. 3), by an anonymous mid-twelfth-century court painter, Li T'ang's style, exemplified by the thin iron-wire line and light, transparent colors of the mounted standard-bearers (pl. 26c), appears both casually "written" and kinesthetically charged.

In composition, Li T'ang relies on the ancient method of using tall trees to divide scenes or to define space (see fig. 4). While his studies of important single trees, as seen in the fourth and fifth scenes (pls. 26d, e), recall earlier great trees in the Li Ch'eng–Kuo Hsi tradition (see pl. 9), Li T'ang develops a strong interest in contrasting two opposing types, the great pine tree and the hardwood deciduous tree. The interplay between a pine and a scrub oak in his later landscape painting *Autumn* (fig. 87), for example, becomes familiar in landscapes by such Southern Sung artists as Ma Yüan and Hsia Kuei. With his narrower, more concentrated vision of nature (recalling that of Hui-tsung, see pl. 22), Li T'ang created a new landscape idiom.

Finally, in composition, *Duke Wen of Chin* again shows the influence of Li Kung-lin. Duke Wen's return journey is portrayed in six tableaux, which, because they emphasize psychological interpretation, are presented as specific dramatic moments rather than as continuous narrative. The presentation of several psychological situations and layers of meaning in a single scene is

Pl. 26h. Detail, pl. 26a



Fig. 87. Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s). *Two Seasonal Landscapes*, pair of hanging scrolls. *Autumn*. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 38⅝ x 17⅛ in. (98.1 x 43.4 cm). Kōto-in, Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

enhanced by a naturalistic spatial organization, originally seen in the work of Li Kung-lin. In a ninth-century illustration of Prince Siddhartha holding a discussion with his courtier (fig. 88) a tree and architectural elements are, like stage settings, frontally disposed; the figures move and relate to one another only laterally, parallel to the picture plane. In contrast, Li Kung-lin's treatment of a similar court gathering, in the *Classic of Filial Piety* (pl. 8d), the single architectural element, the emperor's couch, is placed diagonally, the front leg breaking through the picture plane into the viewer's space. Furthermore, the disposition of the figures around the emperor creates a psychological tension that draws the viewer into the picture, inviting him to become a participant in the unfold-



Fig. 88. *Scenes from the Life of the Buddha*, T'ang dynasty, 9th century. Detail, "Prince Siddhartha Holding a Discussion." Banner from Tun-huang, Kansu Province, ink and color on silk, 16¾ x 6⅞ in. (42.5 x 17.5 cm). British Museum, London

ing drama. Similarly, an architectural drawing by Li Kung-lin (pl. 8c), which displays the late Northern Sung mastery of continuous recession typically seen in landscape painting, shows a full integration of the figures within the spatial setting. Following in this tradition, the figures in Li T'ang's *Duke Wen of Chin* move easily in and out of the architectural settings and through the landscape. And like Li Kung-lin's depiction of the emperor's couch in the court gathering of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, some of Li T'ang's horses and carriages are shown at a sharply foreshortened angle, breaking out of the picture plane and coming directly toward the viewer (pl. 26g).

This naturalistic approach to spatial organization is also seen in *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi* (pls. 27a–d). The scroll is an exact copy of the original scroll commissioned by Emperor Kao-tsung in the early 1140s, conceivably by a court painter of the early Ming period. It is divided into eighteen sections that illustrate a cycle of songs composed by the eighth-century poet Liu Shang. Only four damaged fragments of the original scroll—from episodes three, five, thirteen, and eighteen (fig. 89)—survive.

Kao-tsung, after accepting the humiliating terms of a peace treaty with the Chin in 1141, succeeded in securing the return of his mother, the empress dowager Wei, along with the mortal remains of Hui-tsung, Hui-tsung's first wife, and his own first wife, all of whom had died in captivity in the 1130s. *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute*, dating probably from the early 1140s, echoes the return of the empress dowager by presenting the parallel story of Lady Wen-chi of the Han dynasty. In the year 195, Lady Wen-chi was abducted by the Hsiung-nu hordes. She spent twelve years in Mongolia as the wife of a chieftain, bore him two children, and was finally ransomed and returned



home.[29] The saga of Lady Wen-chi tells of loneliness and sorrow in an alien land, the discovery of love, the loss of love, and the integration of experience. The first song is "The Abduction of Wen-chi":

> The Han house is declining, barbarians from all four corners invade;
> They raise arms, and wars are incessant.
> Pity my father and mother, who bore and raised me;
> Now is the time to witness partings and turmoil.
> At gauze-covered windows, and looking into mirrors,
> I never experienced the world;
> I thought the beaded curtains would shelter me.
> But one day the barbarian cavalry entered China;
> Suddenly, the land swarmed with soldiers.
> Alas, my unfortunate life is now at sword's point,
> A helpless woman carried away into the aliens' dust.

The illustration (pl. 27a) shows nomad soldiers ransacking a mansion, seizing the daughter of the house, and then presenting her to their chieftain in the courtyard. The courtyard mansion, with elegantly curved eaves and light, open construction, depicts early Southern Sung architecture in the Chiang-nan area. The aerial perspective, affording a bird's-eye view of well-planned urban dwellings and city streets, resembles that of *Spring Festival on the River* (fig. 90), by the twelfth-century Southern Sung expatriate Chang Tse-tuan, which recalls the halcyon days of the Northern Sung capital, Pien-ching.[30]

The contrast between the comforts and luxuries of urban life with the harsh and bleak existence in the steppes is brought forth in a series of songs and illustrations that relate the story of Wen-chi in the desert. The figural narrative is here fully integrated in landscape settings:

> I was taken on horseback to the ends of the earth,
> Tiring of life, I sought death, but death would not come.

Fig. 89. Unidentified artist (early 1140s). *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Detail, "Lady Wen-chi's Return," section of a handscroll mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⅞ x 22 in. (25 x 55.8 cm). Denman Waldo Ross Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (28.65)

Opposite, bottom
Fig. 90. Chang Tse-tuan (active early 12th century). *Spring Festival on the River.* Handscroll, ink and light color on silk, 9¾ x 208¼ in. (24.8 x 528.7 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Pls. 27a–d. Unidentified artist (15th century?), after Sung Academy painter (early 1140s). *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Handscroll, ink, color, and gold on silk, 11$\frac{3}{16}$ x 477 in. (28.3 x 1207.5 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.3)



Pl. 27a. *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi*. Detail, "The Abduction of Wen-chi"



The barbarians stink so. How can they be considered human? . . .
The cold sands are boundless: one can no longer tell the south from the north . . .
They can make me work, or they can cut my hair . . .
But to make me his wife is worse than killing me . . .
In the vast barbarian sky my cries are not answered,
Yet the bright moon is my Han moon, which should recognize me . . .
I sleep by water and sit on the grass,
The wind that blows from China tears my clothes to shreds . . .
My days and nights are endless.

In the fifth scene, "Encampment by a Stream" (pl. 27b), the unhappy Wen-chi and her husband are seated at a meal under a tent; at the left, behind a screen, cooks prepare joints of mutton in iron caldrons, the grease and smell of which are among Wen-chi's chief complaints. The drawing of the trees and grass recalls the work of Chao Ling-jang (pl. 20). Lady Wen-chi's husband tries to amuse her with music (pl. 27c), but the strains of the instruments only make her more desolate.

Then a son is born, and the hatred she feels for her abductors is transformed:

When I became pregnant with a barbarian child, I wanted to destroy myself,
Yet once I bore him, I found the love of mother and child.
His looks are strange, and his speech is different, yet my hate turns into love . . .
How can I not pity that which my womb has borne and my hand nurtured?

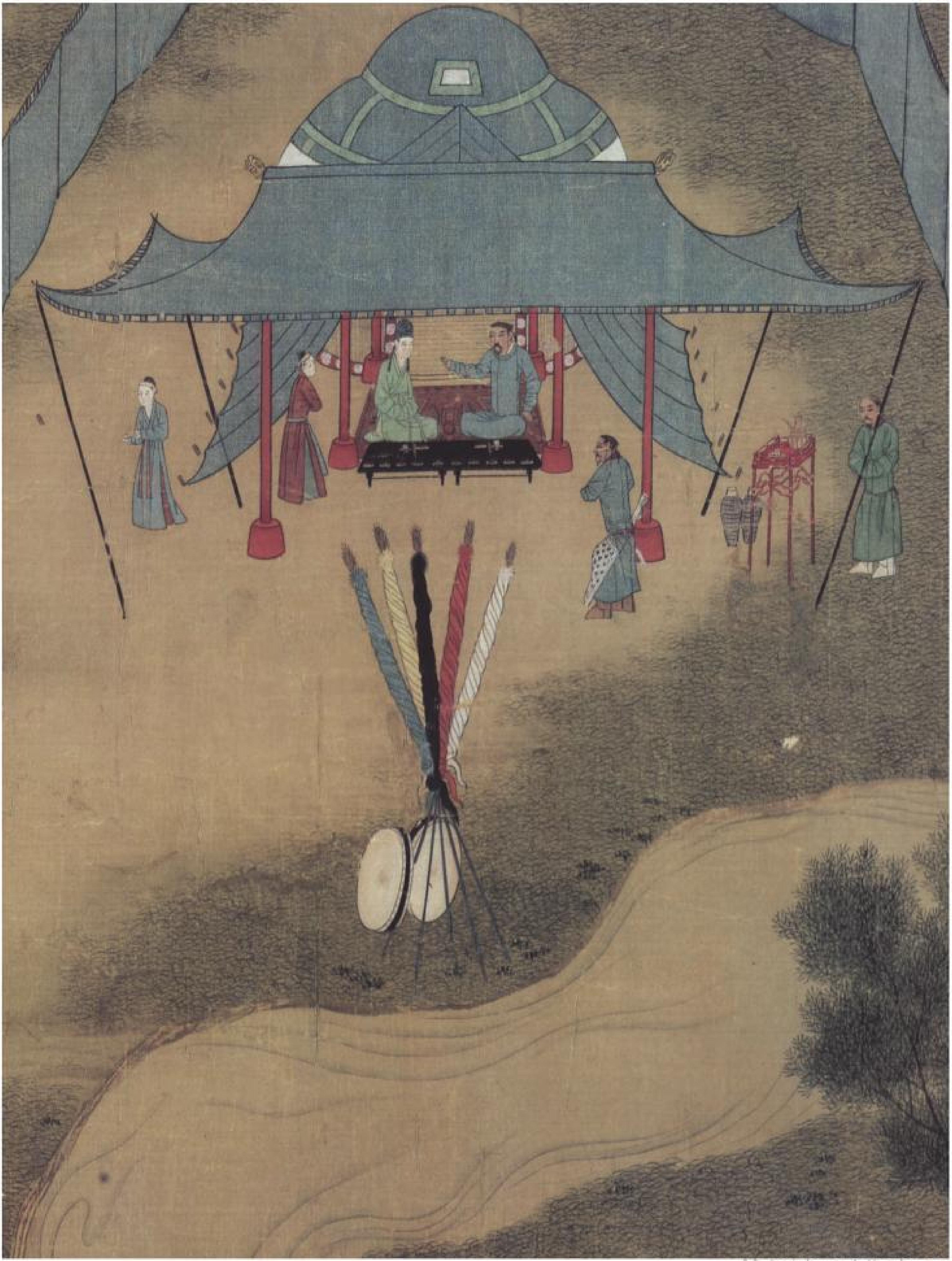
A Chinese envoy is finally sent to ransom her. Lady Wen-chi's initial joy, however, turns to grief when she learns she will have to leave her children behind (pl. 27d):

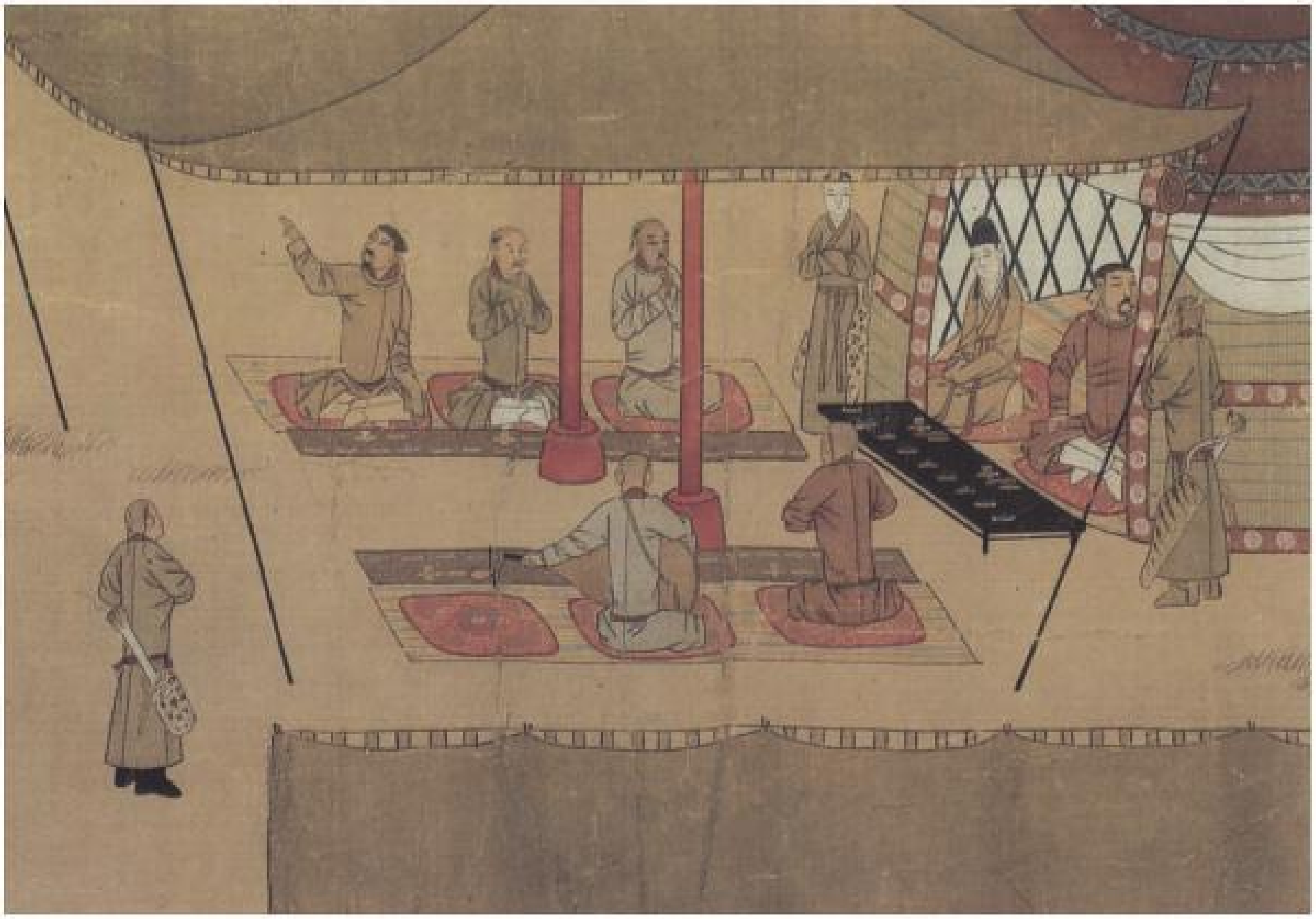
Now I must abandon my children in order to return home.
Across ten thousand miles of mountains and rivers, I shall arrive at our border stations,
And once having turned away, forever my children will be lost to me.
With tear-stained face, I turn toward the setting sun;
All the long day I have stood here, looking to the south and then to the north.

In the original painting for the eighteenth song (fig. 89), which represents Lady Wen-chi's return, the setting of the first song is duplicated, but the activities depicted and the prevailing mood are quite different. As Wen-chi is joyfully welcomed back by her relatives inside the courtyard, the streets outside continue their normal bustle.

The events and sufferings described in this thousand-year-old romance must have seemed palpably real to numberless northern Chinese families who had fled south to escape the nomad conquerors and who had had similar

Pl. 27b. *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Detail, "Encampment by a Stream"





Pl. 27c. *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Detail, "Concert on the Steppe"

experiences of homes broken and families reunited. Seen against the history of the Sung imperial family, the paintings of the *Eighteen Songs* express the tragedy of a national trauma.

By far the most extensive cycle of symbolic narratives sponsored by Kao-tsung is the illustrations to the *Classic of Poetry*, dating from the 1160s, a project carried on by his successor, Emperor Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162–89).[31] Comprising three hundred five odes dating from about 1000 to 700 B.C., the *Classic of Poetry* is one of the thirteen classics of the Confucian canon. It is divided into three groups: the *feng*, folk songs from ancient regional cultures; the *ya*, courtly odes sung at occasions of state entertainment and celebration; and the *sung*, panegyrics and sacrificial temple songs. As early as the Han dynasty, the *Classic of Poetry* was a regular part of the Academy curriculum. Traditional commentaries on the odes explored the historical context in which they were written and their moral and political implications.[32] Kao-tsung's sponsorship of a new cycle of illustrations was therefore an important part of his program of dynastic revival, a reaffirmation of the known, "civilized" world at a time of threatened tribal conquest. In Kao-tsung's scrolls, each calligraphy that precedes a painting begins with a brief commentary, traditionally called the Little Preface, by



Pl. 27d. *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Detail, "The Farewell"

the early Han dynasty scholar Mao-kung (active ca. 2nd century B.C.). Ma Ho-chih's illustrations, which follow the Mao commentary, represent the orthodox Confucian views of history and politics.

There is general consensus among modern scholars that the calligraphies on the more than twenty surviving scrolls of the *Classic of Poetry* are the work of palace scribes writing in the manner of Kao-tsung. The most accomplished paintings are by Ma Ho-chih, although it is generally believed that Ma employed assistants who worked under his supervision in the execution of many of the scrolls. The existence of duplicate and triplicate versions of some of the scrolls suggests that Kao-tsung had copies made, perhaps to be used as gifts.

In the 1130s, Kao-tsung began to cultivate a habit of daily practicing calligraphy by transcribing texts from the Confucian classics. "In this way not only do I practice calligraphy, I also memorize the classics," he declared in 1142.[33] Within a short time, the emperor's transcriptions of the teachings of Confucius began to appear in government schools. In 1138, at the suggestion of the prime minister, Ch'in Kuei, the *Classic of Filial Piety* as transcribed by Kao-tsung was first engraved in stone. This meant that the text, through rubbings, could be widely disseminated. Because of its underlying theme of moral obligation and obedience to authority, the concept of filial piety was used to

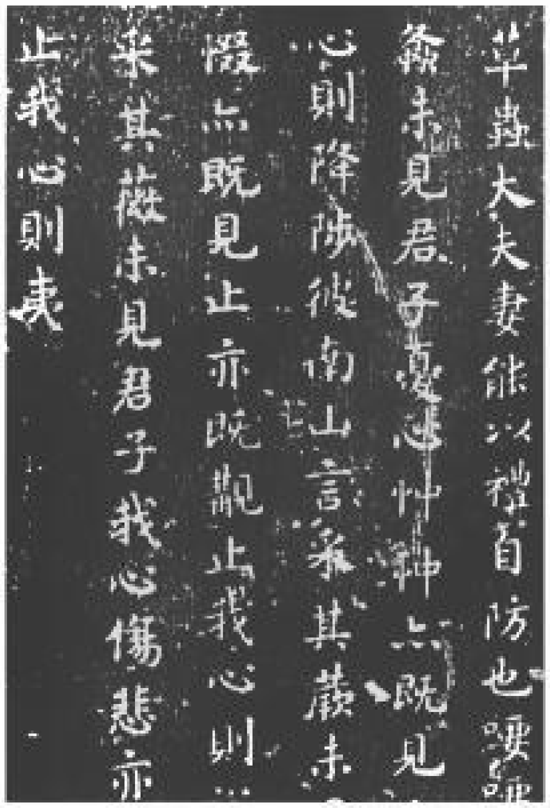


Fig. 91. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *The Classic of Poetry*, from *The Stone Classics*, dated 1143. Rubbing, height of line 9 in. (23 cm)

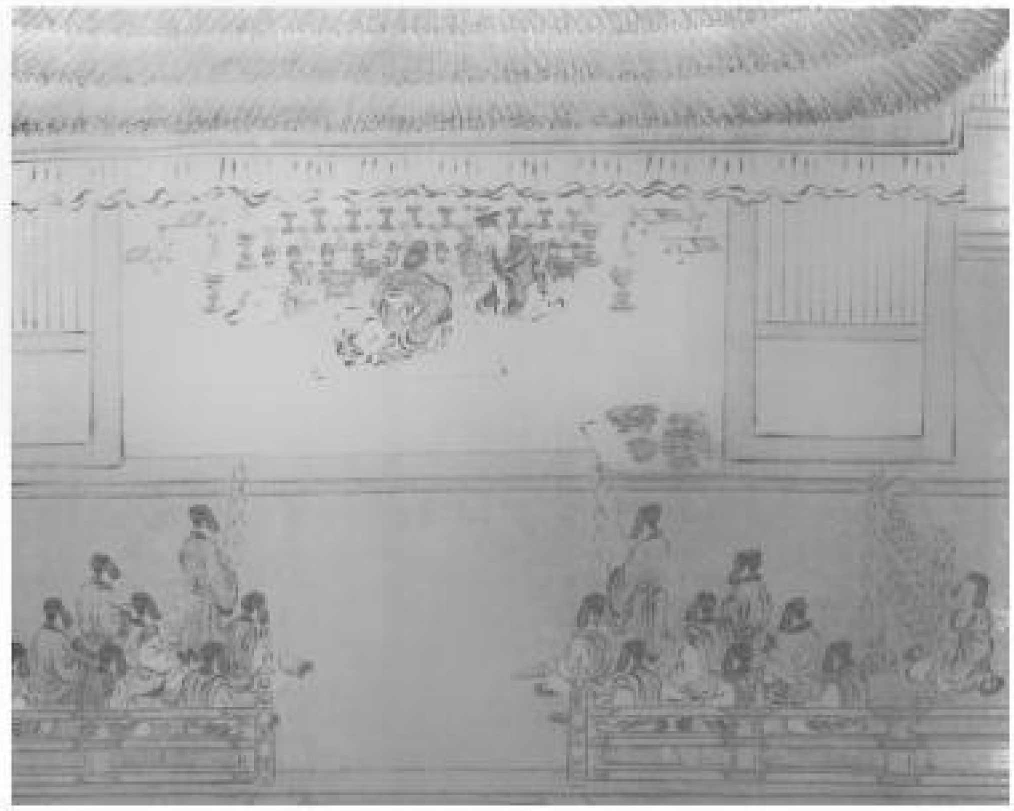


Fig. 92. Ma Ho-chih (active ca. 1130–ca. 1170). *Sacrificial Odes of Chou*. Detail, "Bright Hall." Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10⅞ x 293 in. (27.5 x 743 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shen-yang

propagandize government policy; it was, for example, used to justify the acceptance of unfavorable peace terms with the Chin in 1141 because such acceptance would result in the repatriation of members of the imperial family, both those who had survived and those who had died in captivity. By 1143, engraved steles carved with the emperor's transcriptions of other major classics, including the *Classic of Poetry* (fig. 91), were erected at the newly rebuilt National University in Lin-an, and replicas of the stones were installed in government schools throughout the empire.[34]

A native of the south from the Lin-an area, Ma Ho-chih (active ca. 1130–ca. 1170) belonged to the new generation of southern painters who grew up under the Southern Sung. It is not known whether he started out as a scholar-official or as a professional court painter. He is mentioned in a late thirteenth-century account as the leader of a group of ten painters in Kao-tsung's imperial Painting Academy,[35] but according to a fourteenth-century biographer, he attained the rank of Vice Minister of the Board of Works, which suggests that he was more than just a professional painter.[36]

In illustrating the ancient odes, Ma does not use the historical narrative approach as exemplified in *Duke Wen of Chin* or *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute*; instead, in each illustration, he tries to generalize and summarize the poetic content. His figures are presented as purely symbolic; their movements are carefully choreographed and all narrative interaction between them is eliminated. Ma's drawing of the drapery shows the pervasive influence of Li Kung-lin's plain drawing technique on Southern Sung figure painting. Unlike Li,

Fig. 93. Ma Ho-chih (active ca. 1130–ca. 1170). *Sacrificial Odes of Chou.* Detail, "Altar of Heaven." Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10⅞ x 293 in. (27.5 x 743 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shen-yang



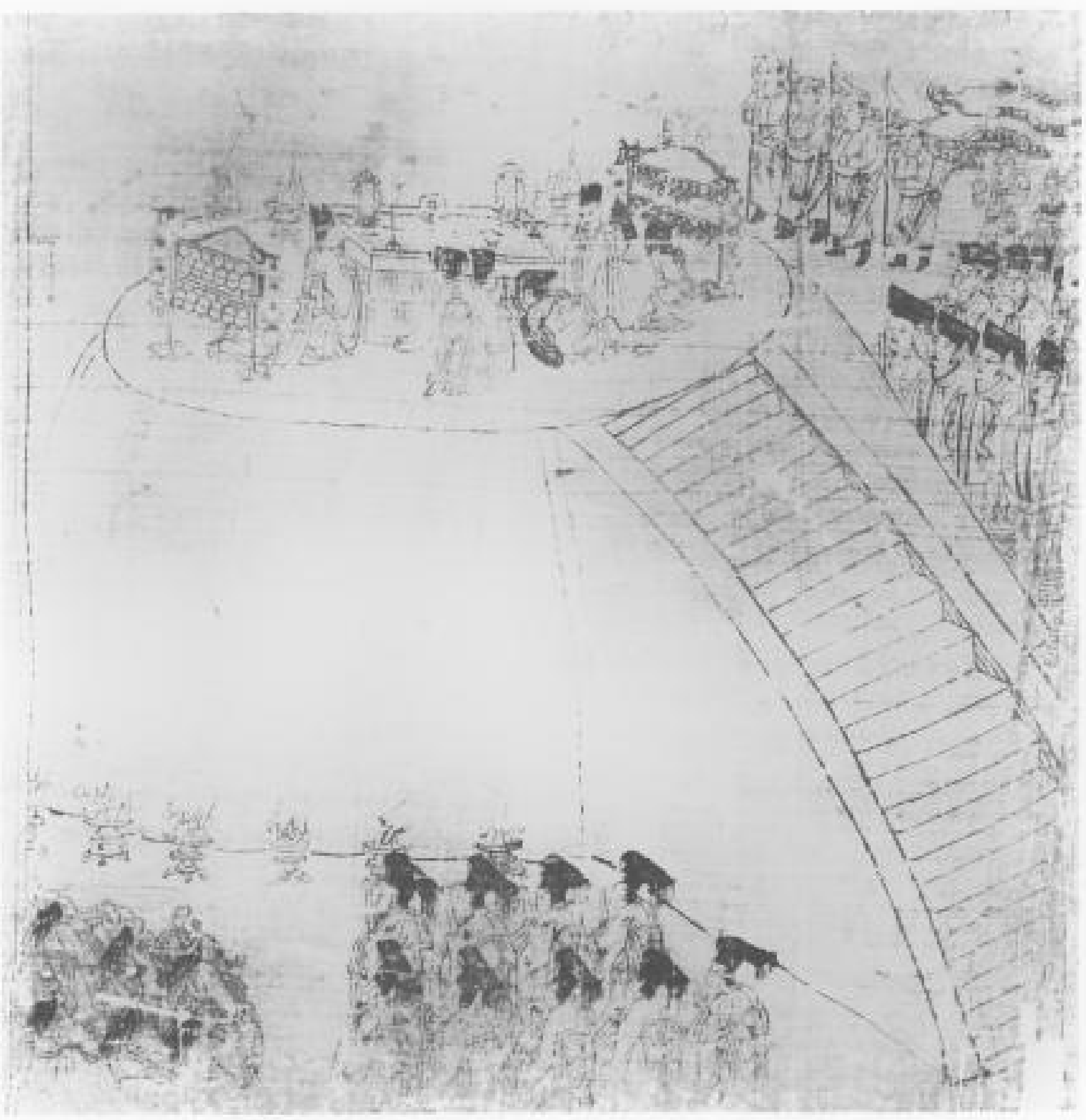


Fig. 94. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Classic of Filial Piety.* Detail from Chapter 9, "Sage's Rule" (pl. 8b)



however, who varies his brush technique within one painting, Ma Ho-chih channels all his expressive energy into his fluctuating calligraphic formula, known as "orchid-leaf" drawing.

As a model, Ma uses the didactic tableau as seen in the *Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g). In the scroll *Sacrificial Odes of Chou*, for example, he develops a series of illustrations of imperial ancestors (fig. 92) and ritual sacrifices to Heaven (fig. 93) based on illustrations of the same theme by Li Kung-lin (pls. 8b, c; and fig. 94). Turning Li's plain drawing into the thickening-and-thinning orchid-leaf manner, Ma Ho-chih creates a visual and musical poetry alive with energy.

The *Odes of the State of Pin* from the *Classic of Poetry* (pls. 28a–c) comprises seven poems, or odes: "The Seventh Month," "The Owl," "Eastern Hills," "Broken Axes," "Cutting an Ax Handle," "Fish Nets," and "The Wolf's Dewlap."[37] Pin, a small state in the Shensi region, was the home of the ancestors of the Chou kings for nearly five centuries before the Chou dynasty was founded. The seven odes of Pin relate to the deeds of the Duke of Chou, regent of the young King Ch'eng (r. ca. 1040–ca. 1003 B.C.).

Pls. 28a–c. Ma Ho-chih (active ca. 1130–ca. 1170) and assistants. *Odes of the State of Pin*. Handscroll, ink, color, gold, and silver on silk, 10⅞ x 284½ in. (27.6 x 722.6 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.3)

Pl. 28a. *Odes of the State of Pin*. Detail, "The Seventh Month"



The first ode, "The Seventh Month" (pl. 28a), shows the labors and occupations of an ancient people in arcadia. The illustration depicts an agricultural society in a full landscape setting. Beginning at the right, a man observes a constellation in the sky; to the left, beyond a thick haze of clouds, young girls gather mulberry leaves; below them, men hoe and plow the field while a woman and child carry food to the working men; finally, at the left, a feast is held at the house of the lord, and dancers and musicians perform in the courtyard. While the poem itself is rich in narrative detail, Ma, in his attempt to create a coherent visual image, is highly selective. To suggest an archaic feeling, naturalistic description is minimized; rather, the scenes are enclosed in space cells juxtaposed on the picture plane and tilted up toward the viewer. The lyrical mood of an earthly paradise is captured in the fluctuating rhythms of the orchid-leaf brushline pulsing through the billowing clouds and jagged rocks, the tree branches and draperies.

The second poem,"The Owl" (pl. 28b), is a political allegory about the Duke of Chou's stand against two of his brothers. In the poem the duke is symbolized by a bird protecting its young, who represents his ward, King Ch'eng:

O owl, O owl,
You have taken my young.
Do not destroy my house.
With love and with toil,
I nourished them—I am to be pitied.
. . . .
My wings are injured,
My tail is broken,
My house is in peril,
Tossed about in wind and rain.
I can but sound a cry of woe.[38]

In the illustration, a great tree with two rocks at its base quivers in the thrall of an electric rainstorm. In typical symbolic abbreviation, no owl is shown; instead, in the branches, a mother bird guards her nest, while her mate flies toward her at the far right with a twig in its beak, reinforcement for their threatened home. The allegorical nature of the painting is underscored by the expressionistic style of the representation, conveyed by an electrified orchid-leaf brushstroke and ink wash mixed with specks of gold and silver.

In the final poem, "The Wolf's Dewlap" (pl. 28c), the Duke of Chou is portrayed as a wise old wolf, whose movement, however, is constrained because he trips on his own large dewlap and long tail. Ma shows three court officials on the left commenting on the old wolf, at right, encircled by a wreath of cloud scrolls. In describing the difficulties of an elderly statesman, the metaphor of the wolf's dewlap may allude to Kao-tsung's own position, after 1162, as an emperor in retirement.

A second scroll from the *Classic of Poetry, Courtly Odes, Beginning with "Wild Geese"* (pl. 29), illustrates six poems about the Chou king Hsüan (r. 827–782 B.C.), whose reign was viewed as another example of a dynastic revival. Kao-tsung had a special fondness for the poem "Wild Geese," which in 1135 he transcribed himself and presented to the prime minister, Chao Ting.[39] The poem sings the praises of King Hsüan, under whose rule vast multitudes of people, having survived long years of war and suffering, found peace and a sense of hope:

The wild geese are flying,
Su-su goes the rustle of their wings.
There are those engaged in the campaign,
Suffering pain and toil in the open fields.
All are piteous.
Alas, for the wifeless and the widowed!

The wild geese are flying;
They gather in the midst of the marsh.
There are those building the walls,
Hundreds of them rising at once.
Though there is pain and toil,
In the end, they settle in their homes.[40]





Pl. 28b. *Odes of the State of Pin.*
Detail, "The Owl"

Pl. 28c. *Odes of the State of Pin.*
Detail, "The Wolf's Dewlap"

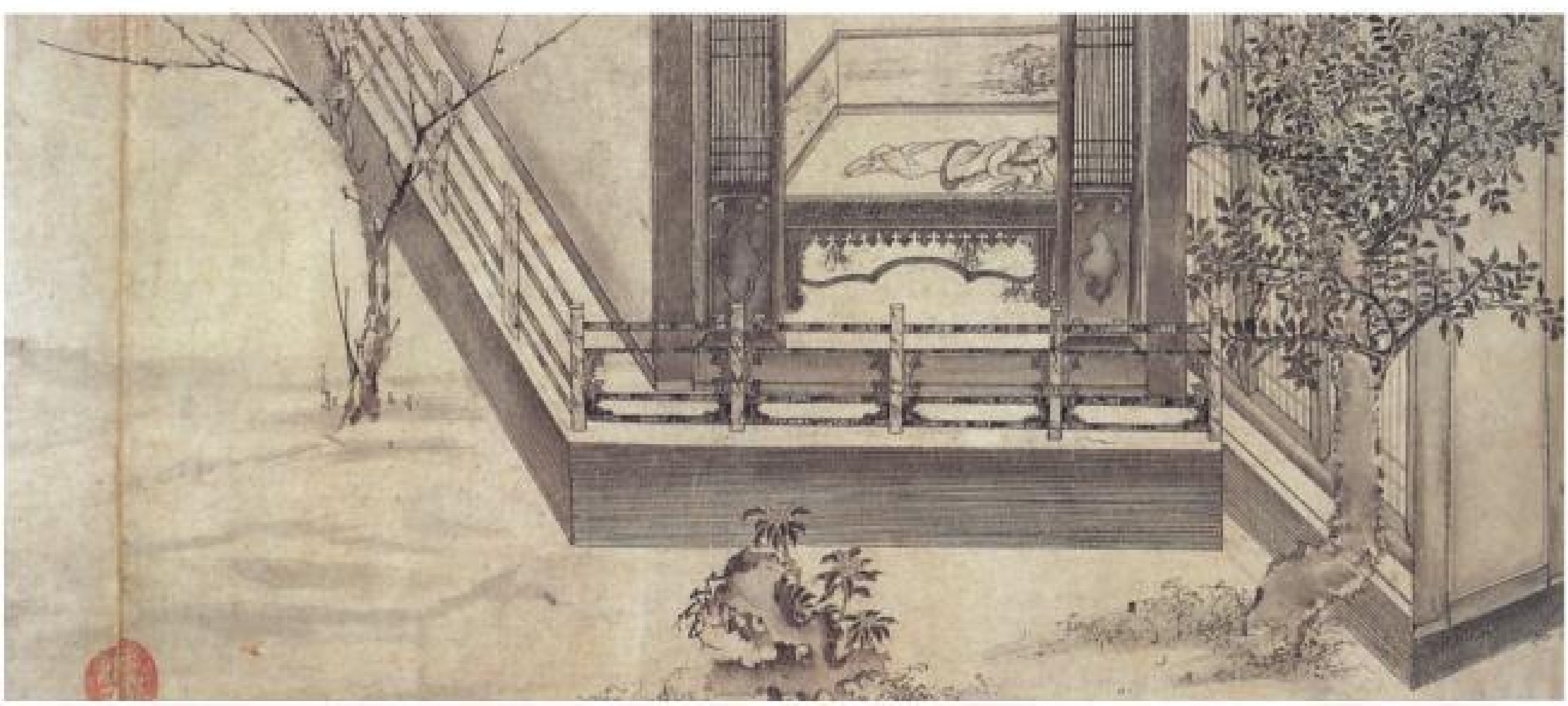




In the illustration, a pair of wild geese return to their young nesting in the water reeds. Following the cyclical laws of the seasons, the wild geese traverse the continents without rest. The settling of the wild geese symbolizes, in the courtly panegyric, the reestablishment of peace under Kao-tsung.

Pl. 29. Ma Ho-chih (active ca. 1130–ca. 1170) and assistants. *Courtly Odes, Beginning with "Wild Geese."* Detail, "Wild Geese." Section of a handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10 x 30½ in. (25.3 x 77.5 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1984 (1984.475.1)

Odes of the State of Pin: The Seventh Month (pls. 30a, b), formerly believed to be by Li Kung-lin but now attributed to an unidentified thirteenth-century painter, exemplifies Southern Sung literary and genre narrative.[41] Executed in



Li's plain drawing technique, the long handscroll illustrates the first of the *Odes of the State of Pin* as a continuous narrative that reflects contemporary life in Southern Sung China. This literal and explicit illustration of the content of the ode is the opposite of Ma Ho-chih's monoscenic, symbolic approach to the same subject (pl. 28a). The fifth stanza, for example, reads:

> In the fifth month the locust moves its legs;
> In the sixth month the cricket shakes its wings;
> In the seventh month it is out in the grounds;
> In the eighth month it is under the roof;
> In the ninth month it is in the doorway;
> In the tenth month the cricket is under our bed.[42]

In the handscroll (pl. 30a), the passage of time is illustrated, from right to left, by the march of the crickets across a courtyard, into a pavilion, and under a couch on which a man reclines. In details worthy of any fine album painting, they kick their legs and shake their wings in their sprightly seasonal call. Further into the poem:

> In the eighth month we pluck the date trees;
> In the tenth month we reap the rice
> To make spring wine,
> To enhance vigorous longevity.[43]

Pls. 30a, b. Unidentified artist (13th century). *Odes of the State of Pin: The Seventh Month.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 11 11/16 x 540 in. (29.7 x 1371 cm). John M. Crawford, Jr. Collection, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1982 (1982.459)

Pl. 30a. *Odes of the State of Pin: The Seventh Month.* Detail, "Crickets"

The painting for this verse (pl. 30b) shows laborers picking dates, reaping the rice crop, and making wine. These illustrations of farming and production relate to the *Illustrations of Plowing and Weaving,* a cycle of twenty-one pictures that depict agriculture and twenty-four pictures that depict sericulture, which were first engraved in stone by imperial edict in 1210.[44] By the thirteenth century, with the spread of printing, such illustrations also enjoyed increasingly wide circulation in the form of the printed book.





Pl. 30b. *Odes of the State of Pin: The Seventh Month.* Detail, "Bringing in the Harvest"

Southern Sung Imperial Calligraphy

Despite its relative military weakness, the Southern Sung dynasty managed to consolidate its rule over southern China for one hundred fifty years, fending off invasions by both the Chin and the Mongols. More significant were the enormous social and intellectual changes that occurred and that exerted far-reaching influence on Chinese history. Under Kao-tsung and his successors, the study of history, poetry, and calligraphy and painting played a crucial role not only in the private lives of the emperors but in their public policies and code of behavior as well.

In the 1130s, while still in his late twenties and early thirties, Kao-tsung transcribed the Confucian classics and copied works of ancient calligraphy, bestowing them as gifts or giving them as prizes to his generals, ministers, and other officials. A quiet man of modest, even austere habits, he built in 1158 a retreat where he could "withdraw to private meditation in a place without colors, sounds, or idle amusements."[45]

During the 1130s and early 1140s, Kao-tsung's calligraphic style (figs. 85, 86) was strongly influenced by the individualistic styles of the late Northern Sung masters Huang T'ing-chien and Mi Fu. In the late 1130s, he changed his style, reportedly because, according to a popular contemporary account, the Chin puppet ruler of the northern state of Ch'i, Emperor Liu Yü (r. 1129–38), also wrote in the manner of Huang T'ing-chien, and the two rulers' similar style was causing confusion in secret state communications.[46] Kao-tsung's new style followed in the tradition of the pre-T'ang regular-script manner of the two Wangs—Wang Hsi-chih and Wang Hsien-chih—which had earlier been championed by the T'ang emperor T'ai-tsung. In returning to an archaic and



balanced regular-script manner, Kao-tsung established a new dynastic style in Southern Sung calligraphy.

One important model for his study of Wang Hsi-chih was an original transcription of the *Thousand-Character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts*, by the priest Chih-yung (515?–604?; fig. 95), a seventh-generation descendant of Wang. Chih-yung reportedly wrote more than eight hundred versions of the *Thousand-Character Essay*—a composition of two hundred fifty rhymed lines of four characters each, made by the order of Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502–49)—using characters found in anthologies of Wang Hsi-chih's calligraphy kept in the Liang imperial collection. A copy of Yü Shih-nan's *Thousand-Character Essay* by Kao-tsung (fig. 96), datable to the 1170s, is now in Shanghai.[47] Kao-tsung's regular script, which is modeled after Chih-yung's, is exemplified in his manuscript copy of the *Preface to the Collected Writings of Emperor Hui-tsung*, dated 1154 (fig. 97). Done with the point of the brush, which he would flick and turn primarily with his fingers rather than with his wrist, Kao-tsung's brushwork is supple and smooth, and especially suited to the small writing. The principal hallmark of this square, archaizing, regular script is a prominent wavelike ending stroke (*po*), seen also in the clerical script of the Han period (fig. 42). Kao-tsung's calligraphic manner was easily followed by the court scribes, as well as by later Southern Sung calligraphers. Indeed, it became a dynastic emblem that remained in force until the end of the Southern Sung period, in the late thirteenth century.

Following his abdication in 1162, Kao-tsung lived another twenty-five years in retirement with his wife, the empress Wu (1115–1197), who was also a calligrapher and a poet, devoting himself to scholarly and artistic pursuits. The *Quatrain on Fishermen* (pl. 31), written in a regular script, is a late work from



Fig. 95. Chih-yung (515?–604?). *Thousand-Character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts.* Detail. Album(?), ink on paper, height 9¾ in. (24.7 cm). Ogawa Collection, Kyoto

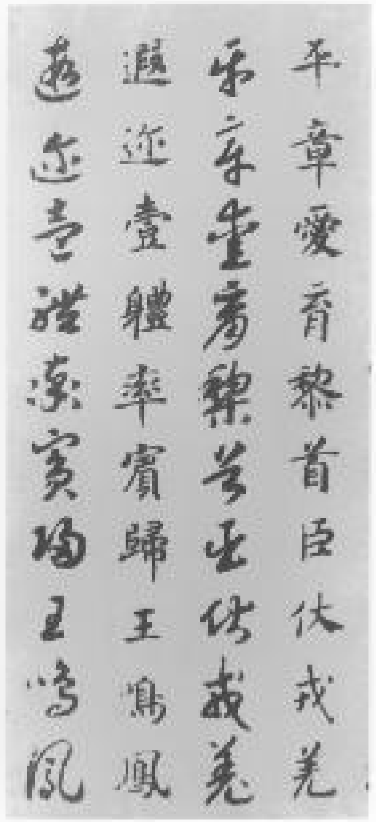


Fig. 96. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Thousand-Character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts, after Yü Shih-nan*, ca. 1170s. Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 9⅛ x 191⅝ in. (23.2 x 486.6 cm). Shanghai Museum

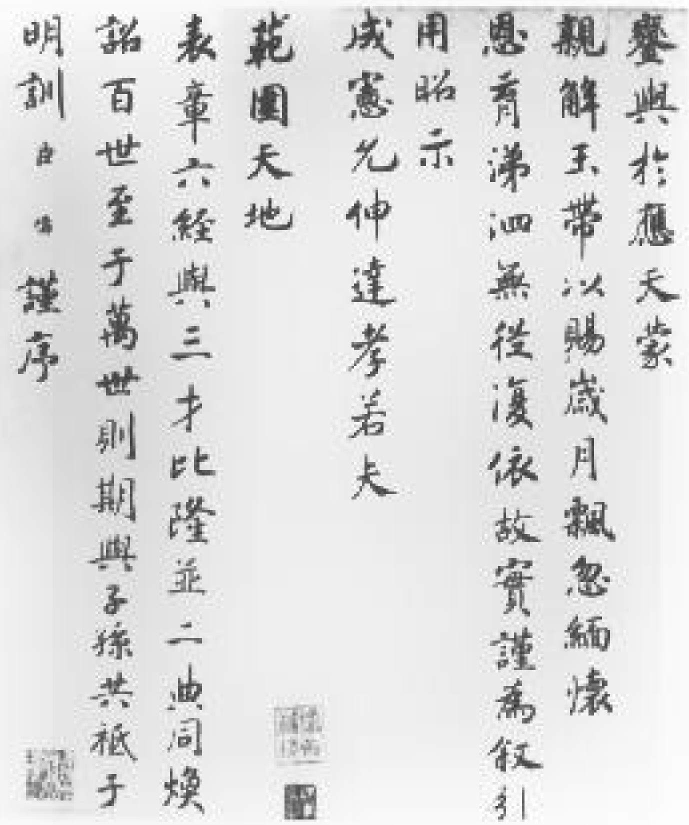


Fig. 97. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Preface to the Collected Writings of Emperor Hui-tsung*, dated 1154. Detail. Handscroll(?), ink on paper, height 10⅞ in. (27.6 cm). Ogawa Collection, Kyoto

this period. Executed with an old brush with a smoothly worn tip, the brushwork is quiescent, yet enriched by a spontaneous variety and liveliness; it resembles the regular script of his *Thousand-Character Essay* (fig. 96), also a late work. The poem, written in four columns, embellishes a round silk fan, a favored format in Southern Sung imperial art. The use of such a fan appears in *Listening to the Sound of a Zither* (fig. 98), an early twelfth-century painting by a member of Hui-tsung's Painting Academy, though the fan held by the courtly gentleman in the painting is not decorated. By the late twelfth century, silk fans were regularly embellished with a painting on one side and a poem on the other, with the image and the words complementing each other. The earliest extant example of an original matched set, excavated from the tomb of the Ming prince Chu T'an (died 1389),[48] shows four lines of cursive script by Kao-tsung (fig. 99a) and a painting of a flowering autumn mallow by an unidentified Academy painter (fig. 99b). It was the retired emperor's custom to inscribe these fans and to bestow them as gifts at special occasions. The poems, when not original works by the emperor himself, were taken from anthologies of T'ang or early Sung poetry.

Kao-tsung inscribed one fan (the companion painting is lost) with his *Quatrain on Fishermen* (pl. 31):



Fig. 98. Unidentified Academy artist (early 12th century). *Listening to the Sound of a Zither.* Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 57⅞ x 20⅛ in. (147 x 51 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Fig. 99a. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Quatrain.* Fan. Gold on silk, 9⅝ x 10 in. (24.3 x 25.5 cm). Shantung Provincial Museum, Chi-nan

Fig. 99b. Unidentified Academy artist (early 12th century). *Autumn Mallows.* Fan (reverse of fig. 99a). Ink, colors, and gold on silk, 9⅝ x 10 in. (24.3 x 25.5 cm). Shantung Provincial Museum, Chi-nan

> Small fishing boats are moored along the sandbanks of a stream,
> Calling to one another, the boatmen have gone to the winehouse.
> Turning in their catch of perch [for money] to buy drink,
> They retire to the song of the oars, to sleep in the rosy mist.

While the gentle beauty of the regular-script calligraphy seems to capture the poem's spirit of contentment, without the painting, the "poetic idea" (*shih-i*) remains unrepresented. In illustrating the poem, the painter might have chosen to show all four images: the boats moored by the stream bank, the men







Pl. 31. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Quatrain on Fishermen.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9¼ x 10 in. (23.5 x 25.4 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.7)

calling to one another, turning in the catch of fish, and retiring for the night. However, the Southern Sung court taste for simplicity and evocation would suggest that the painter, rather than attempting a literal illustration of all four lines, probably would have used only the last image—of men going to sleep "to the song of the oars"—to evoke the tranquil mood of the poem.

An album painting that illustrates a similar theme, *Awakening Under a Thatched Awning* (fig. 100), is accompanied by a poem formerly believed to be inscribed by Kao-tsung but now attributed stylistically to Kao-tsung's son, Hsiao-tsung:

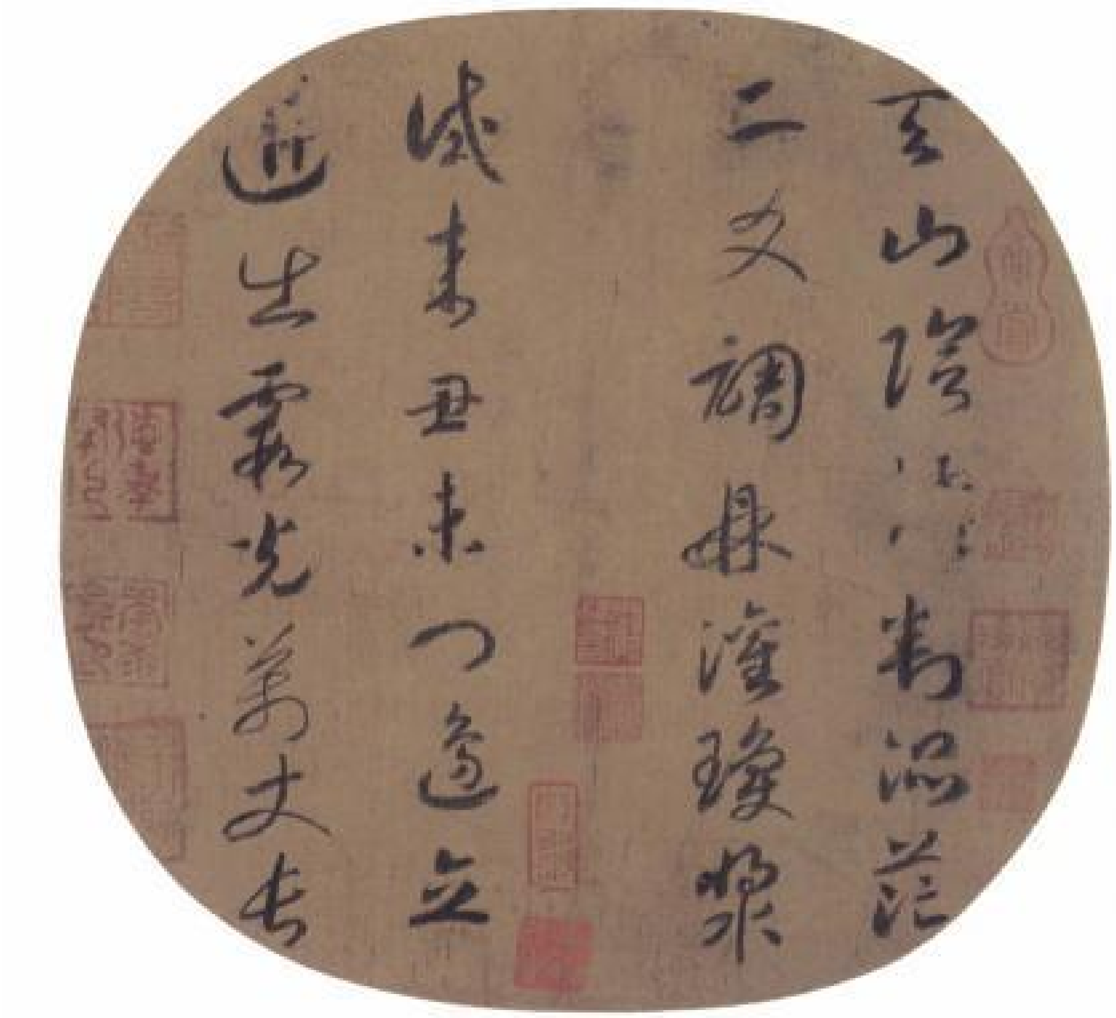
> Who says the fisherman is an old fool?
> Making his way home in a skiff, he is free of all worries.
> With light, breaking waves and a gentle breeze,
> He awakens and rises under a thatched awning, the sun at high noon.[19]

The simple "one-corner" landscape composition uses the familiar Southern Sung Academy formula of two trees on a foreground promontory overlooking a lake bounded by a distant shoreline. The scene is made specific to the poem simply by the addition of a seated man under the boat awning and a breeze rustling through the trees. In evoking poetic ideas, the Southern Sung painter typically used selective details rather than narrative illustration. The attempt here, for example, is not so much to represent the fisherman in his boat as to express the thoughts of the fisherman as he looks out over the vast expanse of shining water.

Kao-tsung's *Quatrain on Heavenly Mountain* (pl. 32), a beautiful late work in an archaic cursive clerical script, compares closely with his famous transcription of the *Rhapsody on the Goddess of the Lo River* (fig. 101), dating to after 1162. Both works are modeled after the cursive clerical style of Chih-yung's

Fig. 100. Emperor Hsiao-tsung (1127–1194; r. 1162–89). Poem inscribed on *Awakening Under a Thatched Awning*, by an unidentified Academy artist (12th century). Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9¾ x 20⅝ in. (24.8 x 52.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei





Pl. 32. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Quatrain on Heavenly Mountain.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9¼ x 9⅝ in. (23.5 x 24.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.6)



Pl. 33. Emperor Hsiao-tsung (1127–1194; r. 1162–89). *Couplet on Pond Scenery.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9 x 9⅝ in. (22.8 x 24.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.9)

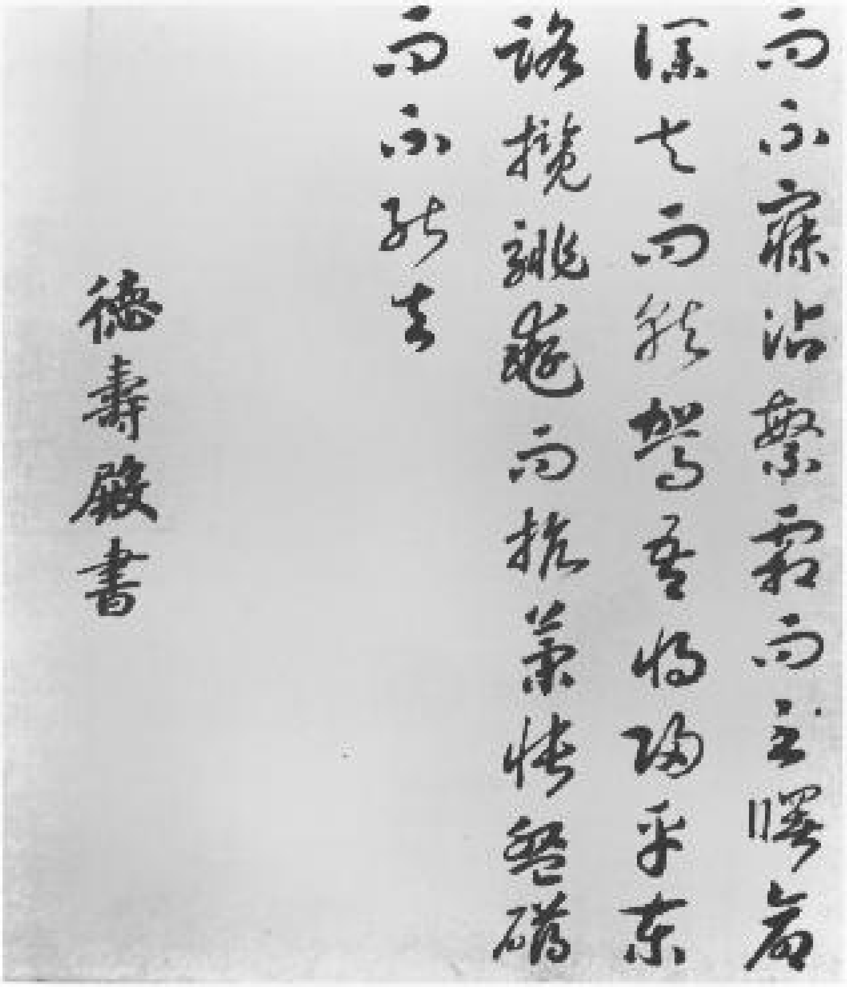


Fig. 101. Emperor Kao-tsung (1107–1187; r. 1127–62). *Rhapsody on the Goddess of the Lo River*, after 1162. Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 11 x 27¾ in. (28 x 70.5 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shen-yang



Fig. 102. Attributed to Emperor Hsiao-tsung (1127–1194; r. 1162–89). *Comments on Calligraphy*. Ink on paper. Private collection, Japan

Thousand-Character Essay (fig. 95). The *Quatrain*, laden with occult and astrological references, reads in part:

> Dark [word missing] from Heavenly Mountain divides the turbid and the vast.
> Ministered by the second hexagram, the elixir pours in a liquid jade.
> As I stand at the north-northeast and the south-southwest gates of the compass,
> I see the flash of rosy lights, ten thousand feet in the air.

While the exact meaning of the poem is unknown,[50] its expression is clearly symbolic and celebratory. It might have been illustrated by a blue-and-green mythical landscape, similarly suffused with symbolism.

Because Kao-tsung did not have an heir, he carefully groomed his adopted son, Hsiao-tsung (1127–1194; r. 1162–89), to succeed him. The so-called Filial Emperor's *Couplet on Pond Scenery* (pl. 33), on a round fan, compares closely with *Comments on Calligraphy* (fig. 102), also generally attributed to him. On the left, under the imperial seal, the inscription reads: "Bestowed on [Chao] Chih-chung," a eunuch attendant in Hsiao-tsung's palace, which seems to confirm the attribution.[51] Hsiao-tsung's brushwork is heavier and more sensuous, his individual characters more elongated than those by Kao-tsung.



Pl. 34. Attributed to Emperor Kuang-tsung (1147–1200; r. 1189–94). *Couplet by Han Yü.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 8⅜ x 8¼ in. (21.3 x 21 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.11)

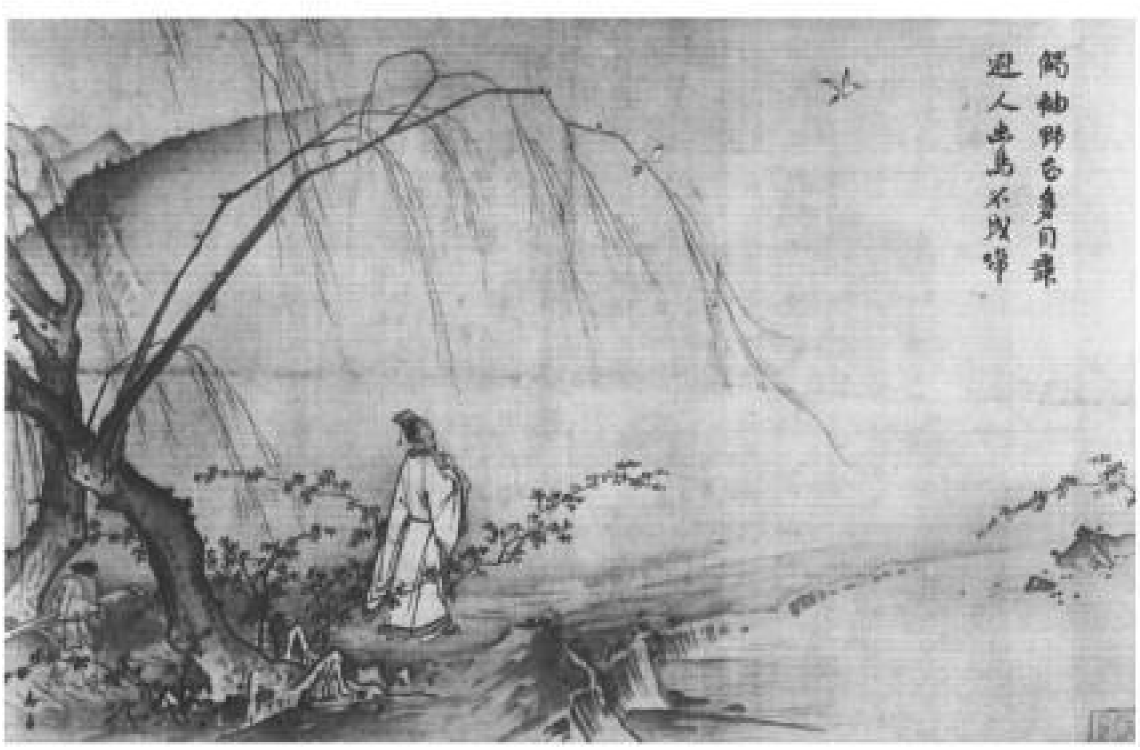


Fig. 103. Emperor Ning-tsung (1164–1224; r. 1194–1224). Inscription on *On a Mountain Path in Spring*, by Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 10¾ x 17 in. (27.4 x 43.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



Fig. 104. Yang Mei-tzu (1162–1232). Inscription of 1216 on *Layers of Icy Silk*, by Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 39¾ x 19½ in. (101 x 49.6 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

But while extremely fluent, the brushwork is less varied and does not show the influence of the archaic clerical script. The couplet describes the stillness of a pond at evening:

> Above the pond, a thin mist envelops the emerald green;
> At water's edge, the late sun plays with dragonflies.

Hsiao-tsung was succeeded in 1190 by the unfortunate, mentally disturbed Kuang-tsung (1147–1200; r. 1189–94), who, after less than five years on the throne, was forced to resign in favor of his son Ning-tsung (1164–1224; r. 1194–1224). While no extant work by Kuang-tsung is known, the *Couplet by Han Yü* (pl. 34) may prove to be from his hand. The couplet is taken from a poem by the great T'ang writer Han Yü (768–824):

> [The bamboo's] lofty appearance defies the austerity of autumn,
> Its chaste color surpasses the lush beauty of spring.[12]



Pl. 35. Empress Yang Mei-tzu (1162–1232). *Quatrain on Yellow Roses.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9¼ x 9⅝ in. (23.5 x 24.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.13)

Although this calligraphy has been attributed to Emperor Ning-tsung,[53] it does not agree with accepted examples of his handwriting (fig. 103).[54] Indeed, the square, carefully balanced form of the regular script shows the strong influence of Kao-tsung and is more typical of the hand of an earlier Southern Sung emperor and very different from the freer, more expressive forms of most thirteenth-century imperial calligraphy.

During the reign of Ning-tsung, his consort, the empress Yang Mei-tzu (1162–1232), was also a formidable presence, both in politics and in the arts. Starting out as a young musician in the palace of Empress Wu (the wife of Kao-tsung), Yang Mei-tzu found favor with Ning-tsung and maneuvered her way into becoming his wife. Wielding great power in court politics, she played



Pl. 36. Empress Yang Mei-tzu (1162–1232). *Quatrain on Spring's Radiance.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9⅛ x 9⅝ in. (23.2 x 24.4 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.12)

an important role in the installation of the next emperor, Li-tsung, following the death of her husband.[55]

Yang Mei-tzu's poems on flower paintings reflect a new kind of lyric poetry that became increasingly popular during the thirteenth century. On a painting of two branches of blossoming plum entitled *Layers of Icy Silk* (fig. 104), by the thirteenth-century Academy painter Ma Lin, for example, Yang Mei-tzu wrote a poem, dated 1216:

> Like a cold butterfly passing the night in the corolla,
> Embracing the rouge center while recalling a past encounter.
> How lovely are the buds at the tip of the chilled branch:
> Such is the beauty that adorned the Han palace.



Pl. 37. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Couplet from a Poem by Han Hung*, dated 1261. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 8 x 8½ in. (20.3 x 21.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.23)

Both the plum blossom and the butterfly allude to the transitory nature of physical beauty, desire, and life itself.[56] The frail blossoms, though not a literal illustration of the poem, are through the words of the poem transformed into an emblem of intense human feeling.

Shuen-fu Lin, in his study of Southern Sung lyric poetry, describes what he sees as "an increasing narrowness of vision, a sensual plenitude of images," culminating in "the retreat toward the object."[57] In the poetic genre of "songs on objects" (*yung-wu tz'u*), Lin argues, the Southern Sung *tz'u* poet "shrinks from the vast world of his lived experience and concentrates his creative vision on one tangible object." We can observe in Southern Sung painting a similar "retreat toward the object." It is best exemplified in the genre of still-life flower painting. In earlier Southern Sung landscapes that depict "poetic ideas" (fig. 100), the painter, in illustrating a poem, projects onto the picture plane the story of the poem. In later Southern Sung painting, by contrast, poetic feeling is focused on one object, which is endowed with an immediate, sensuous presence.

Two poems by Yang Mei-tzu, composed by the aging empress for her husband, Ning-tsung, are representative of the later Southern Sung manner. They

are written in a distinctively expressive regular script and date from the early 1220s. The *Quatrain on Yellow Roses* (pl. 35) reads:

> Snowy stamens dot the tender yellow [flowers];
> The rose is wet with the morning dew that dampens my garment.
> As the west wind sweeps away the wild bees and butterflies,
> I alone, at the border of Heaven, keep company with the fragrant
>   cassia tree.

And the *Quatrain on Spring's Radiance* (pl. 36):

> My makeup worn and faded, only the scent lingers;
> Still I shall enjoy spring's radiance before my eyes.
> Once you said to me, How a year blooms quickly and as quickly dies!
> May we now forsake worldly splendors for the land of wine?[48]

One imagines that the *Quatrain on Yellow Roses* was illustrated, simply, by a branch of yellow roses, while the *Quatrain on Spring's Radiance* might have been illustrated by a paler flower, white pear or apple blossom. The poet, in a voice both intimate and amorous, implores her lover to forsake the world and to retreat with her to "the land of wine." The same lyrical feeling of devotion and longing is beautifully expressed by Yang Mei-tzu's calligraphy, which, though clearly derived from that of Emperor Kao-tsung (pl. 31), is looser and intentionally awkward, with a naïve, feminine quality.

Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64), a ruler of moderate temperament, was the most accomplished of the late Southern Sung imperial



Fig. 105. Attributed to Li Sung (active ca. 1190–1230). *The Hangchow Bore in Moonlight*, ca. 1210. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 8¾ x 8⅞ in. (22.3 x 22 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



Pl. 38. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Couplet on Autumn Sky.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9¼ x 7 in. (23.5 x 17.8 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.20)

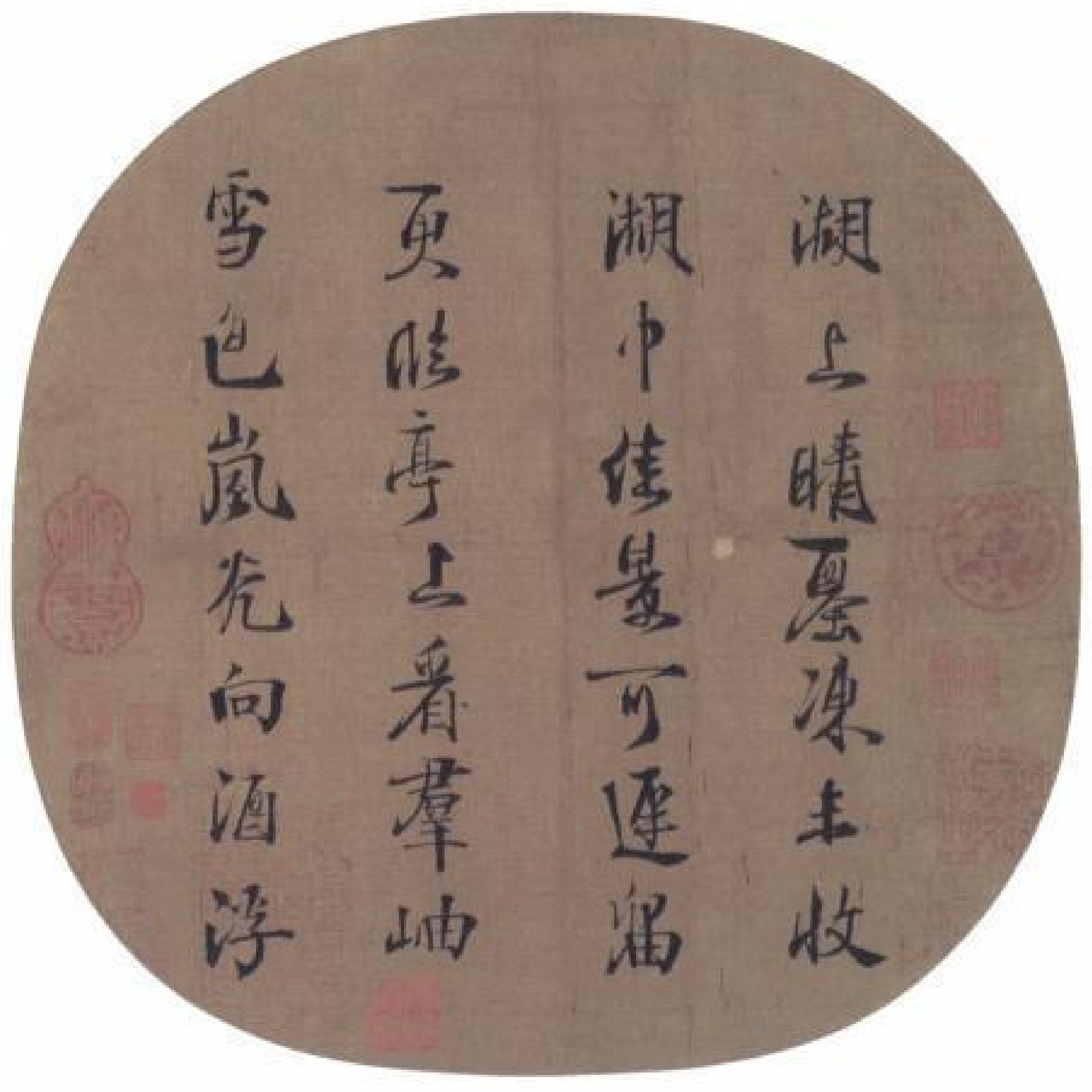
calligraphers. His *Couplet from a Poem by Han Hung* (pl. 37), dated 1261, takes two lines from a poem by the T'ang dynasty poet Han Hung (active ca. 766–80) entitled "Farewell to Yüan Shen on His Return to Chiang-tung":

> The sounds of the tide rise at noon;
> The greens of the mountains are deepest in the south.

These lines may be an illustration of a favorite Southern Sung scene, the famous Hangchow bore at the mouth of the Ch'ien-t'ang River, an example of which is seen in *The Hangchow Bore in Moonlight* (fig. 105), attributed to Li Sung (active ca. 1190–1230). Li-tsung, in a large regular script based on the square forms of Kao-tsung, abandons the archaistic pre-T'ang Chih-yung mode (fig. 95), returning to the monumental wrist-and-arm action of such T'ang models as Ou-yang Hsün and Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 47). The result is a swiftly formed, crisp brushwork that is at once freely expressive and well balanced.

An excellent example of Li-tsung's cursive script is the *Couplet on Autumn Sky* (pl. 38):

> Deep in the autumn, waters are clear to the bottom [of the lake];
> After rain, blueness extends across the sky.



Pl. 39. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Quatrain on Snow-Covered West Lake.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9⅞ x 9⅞ in. (25.2 x 25.2 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.18)

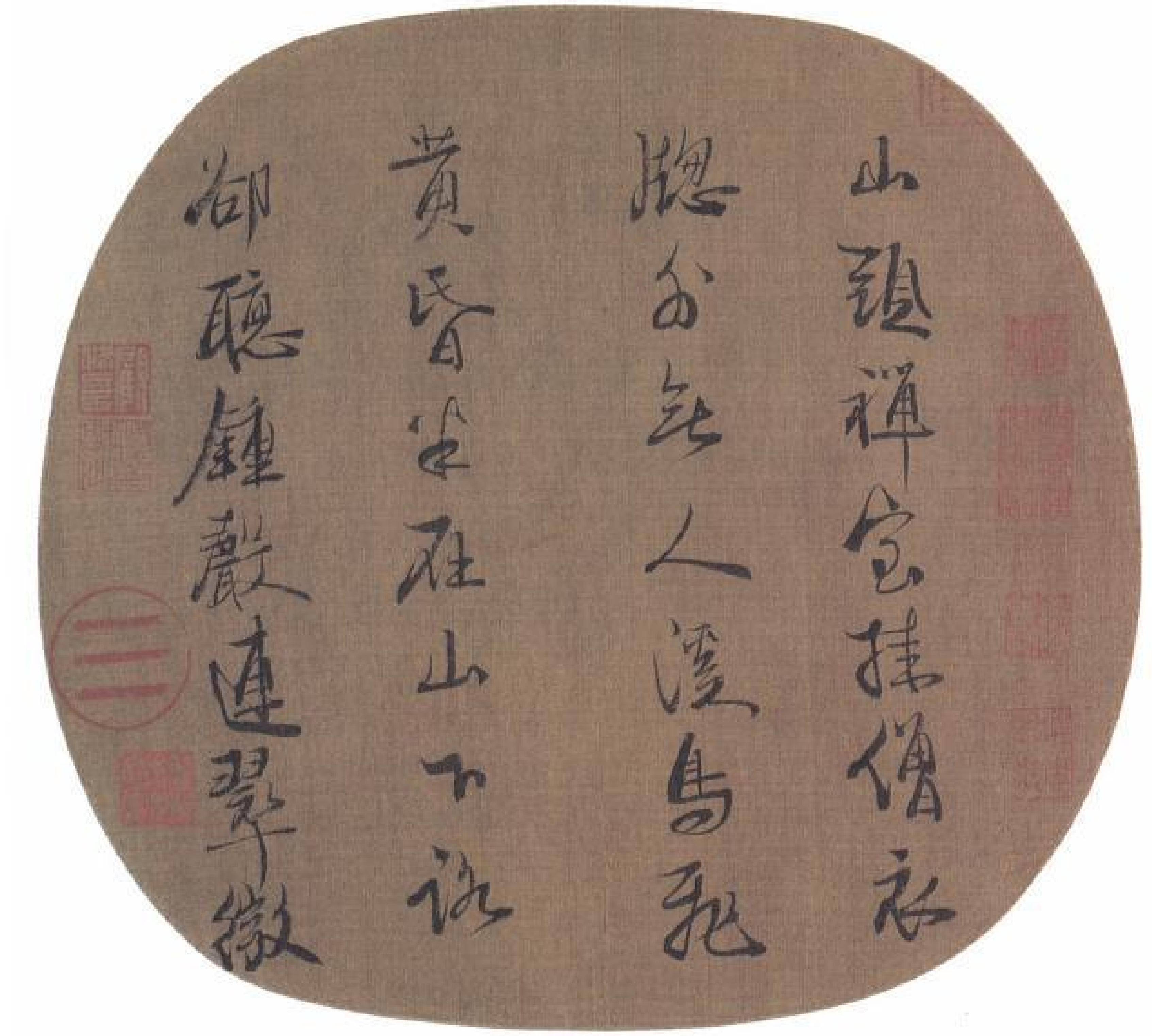
Framed within the narrow oval of the silk fan, the sprightly characters, in rich lacquer-black ink, are knife sharp and restrained. Matching the calligraphy, one imagines, could have been the barest description of water and sky, capturing the essence of quietude and meditation.

Li-tsung's *Quatrain on Snow-Covered West Lake* (pl. 39) describes the legendary beauty of West Lake in Hangchow, by this time developed into a resort for the Southern Sung emperors:

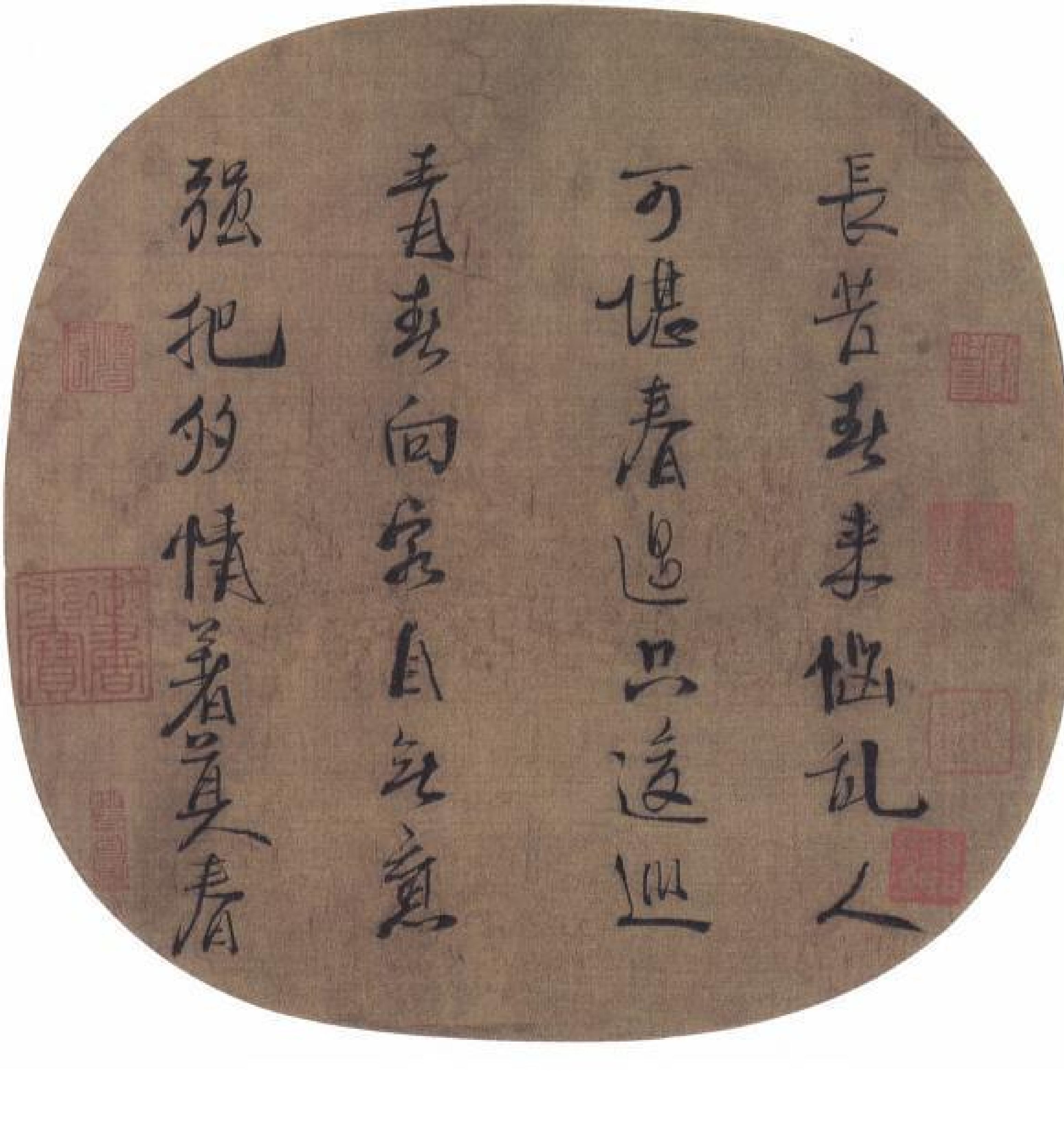
> On the lake, a bright frozen mist lingers;
> On the lake, brilliant sights beckon.
> From the pavilion, I gaze at the mountain peaks;
> The color of snow and a hazy vapor shine in my wine cup.

In the *Quatrain by Meng Hao-jan* (pl. 40), the emperor transcribes a landscape poem by the famous T'ang dynasty poet Meng Hao-jan (689–740):

> In the Ch'an meditation hall, on the mountaintop, hangs a priest's robe.
> There is no one outside the window, only birds flying by a stream.
> As dusk half envelops the mountain path,
> I hear the bells toll over the endless greenery.



Pl. 40. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Quatrain by Meng Hao-jan.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9 x 9⅝ in. (22.9 x 24.7 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.19)



Pl. 41. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Quatrain on Late Spring.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9⅝ x 9¼ in. (24.5 x 23.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.22)



Pl. 42. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Quatrain on a Spring Garden.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 11 x 9½ in. (28 x 24.2 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.21)

Both poems, written in a fluent running script, date from the last years of Li-tsung's life. The swiftly executed brushwork has gained in both suppleness and tensile strength, as individual brushstrokes are now switched from the round to the square and back again to the round with perfect ease and control.

In the *Quatrain on Late Spring* (pl. 41), the emperor laments the coming of old age:

> How spring makes me sad!
> Timidly I bear the passing of spring.
> The young lady has no feeling for me,
> She treats my love merely as that of a waning spring.

Life for the aging emperor, however, was not without its pleasures. The *Quatrain on a Spring Garden* (pl. 42), in a charming cursive script, was written for the "noble consort" who inspired the poem:

> Last year I saw a branch scented with a red fragrance;
> Faintly, I imagined red corollas with little makeup.
> Today, in the palace garden, such colors abound.
> Perhaps, without knowing it, I prayed to the god of spring.

1. The sociologist Max Weber, who links the growth of capitalism in the West with the Puritan ethic, has contrasted Confucian rationalism with Puritan rationalism:

> Both the Puritan and the Confucian were "sober men." But the rational sobriety of the Puritan was founded in a mighty enthusiasm which the Confucian lacked completely; it was the same enthusiasm which inspired the monk of the Occident. The rejection of the world by occidental asceticism was insolubly linked to its opposite, namely, its eagerness to dominate the world. In the name of a supra-mundane God the imperatives of asceticism were issued to the monk and, in variant and softened form, to the world. Nothing conflicted more with the Confucian ideal of gentility than the idea of a "vocation." The "princely" man was an aesthetic value; he was not a tool of a god.

See Max Weber, "Conclusions: Confucianism and Puritanism," in *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1951), pp. 226–49. For further discussion of "professionalism," see Frederick W. Mote, Review of *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty*, by John Dardess, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, no. 1 (June 1986), pp. 302–17.

2. See Chang Hao, *Ken-yüeh chi* (Record of Ken-yüeh), and Tsu Hsiu, *Yang-hua-kung chi* (Record of the Yang-hua Palace), in Li Lien, *Pien-ching yi-chi chih* (Gazetteer of the Archaeological Remains of [the Former Capital] Pien-ching), in *San-t'ieh-t'ang ts'ung-shu* (Collected Works in the San-t'ieh-t'ang) (Honan: Kuan Shu-chü, 1922), *chüan* 4.
3. See Ts'ai T'ao, *T'ieh-wei-shan ts'ung-t'an* (Miscellanea at the Iron-clad Mountain), *Chung-hua* ed. (Beijing, 1983), *chüan* 1. Anita Wai-fong Siu, a graduate student at Princeton, presented a fine seminar report on Hui-tsung in the fall of 1988.
4. Wang Ming-ch'ing, *Hui-ch'en-lu hou-lu yü-hua* (Record of Swinging the Duster), in *Sung-tai shih-liao pi-chi ts'ung-k'an* (A Compilation of Sung Dynasty Historical Sources and Records) (Beijing: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1961), *chüan* 1, p. 273.
5. Ibid., p. 275.
6. Ibid., pp. 276–79.
7. For studies of the Painting Academy during the T'ang and Sung periods, see Yonezawa Yoshiho, "Tō chō ni okeru gain no genryū" (Origins of the Painting Academy During the T'ang Dynasty), *Kokka*, no. 554 (1937), pp. 3–9; Suzuki Kei, "Gagaku o chūshin toshite kisō ga-en no kaikaku to intai sansuiga yōshiki no seiritsu" (The Painting Institute as the Center of the Reform of Hui-tsung's Painting Academy and the Establishment of the Academy Style of Landscape Painting), *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō*, no. 38 (October 1965), pp. 145–84; Shimada Hidemasa, "Kisō-chō no gagaku ni tsuite" (Concerning the Painting Institute During the Reign of Hui-tsung), in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen* (Essays on Chinese Painting in Honor of Professor Suzuki Kei's Sixtieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 111–50; Ts'ai Ch'iu-lai, *Liang-Sung hua-yüan chih yen-chiu* (A Study of the Painting Academy During the Two Sung Periods) (Taipei: Wen-hua Chi-chin Hui, 1978); She Ch'eng, "Pei-Sung hua-yüan chih-tu yü tsu-chih ti t'an-t'ao" (Discussions on the System and Organization of the Northern Sung Painting Academy), *Ku-kung hsüeh-shu chi-k'an* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1983), pp. 69–95; Li Hui-shu, "Sung-tai hua-feng chuan-pien chih ch'i-chi: Hui-tsung mei-shu chiao-yü ch'eng-kung ti shih-li" (A Key to the Change in Sung Painting Style: A Case Study of the Success of Hui-tsung's Artistic Education), parts 1, 2, *Ku-kung hsüeh-shu chi-k'an* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1984), pp. 71–91, and 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1984), pp. 9–36; and Piao Ling-hu, "Sung-tai hua-yüan nei-wai ti i-shu chiao-liu: Tui i-ko lun-tien ti t'an-t'ao" (The Artistic Interchange Between the Sung Painting Academy and Outside the Academy), *Tuo-yün*, no. 3 (1982), pp. 12–23.
8. See *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (Draft of Essential Sung Government Records), "chih-kuan" (Functional Offices) 36.106, in Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Sung Liao Chin hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of Sung, Liao, and Chin Dynasties) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), p. 833; and Shimada Hidemasa, "Kisō-chō no gagaku ni tsuite," p. 129.
9. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi* (A Continuation of the History of Painting; preface dated 1167), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 77.
10. Ibid.
11. From the Confucian classic *The Great Learning*, chap. 5; see James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (1893–95; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 365–66.
12. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, pp. 832, 838; see Shimada Hidemasa, "Kisō-chō no gagaku ni tsuite," p. 115.
13. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 1, p. 3.
14. *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era; preface dated 1120), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 15, p. 163.
15. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 75.
16. Ibid., *chüan* 1, p. 2.
17. *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 9, pp. 91, 96.

18. See Chiang I-han, "Shih-erh shih-chi ti san-fu wu-ming-k'uan shan-shui ku-shih hua" (Three Anonymous Narrative Landscapes of the Twelfth Century), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 13, no. 4 (1979), pp. 25–53.
19. See entry for *Six Horses* (cat. no. 13) by Laurence Sickman, in *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in the Collection of John M. Crawford, Jr.*, exhib. cat. (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1962), pp. 70–72.
20. Donald Brix, a graduate student at Princeton University, is working on a Ph.D. dissertation, "The Legitimization of Sung Kao-tsung: Early Southern Sung Narrative Painting and the 'Auspicious Omens of Dynastic Revival.'" I have benefited from Mr. Brix's careful reading of Southern Sung history.
21. See T'o-t'o et al., eds., *Sung-shih* (Sung Dynastic History) (reprint, Shanghai: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1977), *chüan* 114, pp. 2712–13.
22. Ibid., p. 2713.
23. See Julia K. Murray, "The Role of Art in the Southern Sung Dynastic Revival," *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies*, no. 18 (1986), pp. 41–59.
24. See Suzuki Kei, "Ritō no nanto fukuin to sono yōshiki hensen ni tsuite no ichi-shiron" (A Tentative Theory Concerning Li T'ang's Moving to the South and the Change in [His] Style After the Reestablishment of the [Imperial Painting] Academy), parts 1, 2, *Kokka*, no. 1047 (December 1981), pp. 5–20; no. 1053 (July 1982), pp. 13–23. It was Professor Suzuki who first questioned the traditional assumption that Li T'ang had rejoined the Painting Academy in Hangchow in the Chien-yen era (1127–30).
25. From the section concerning Kao-tsung submitted in 1166 by Liu Cheng (1129–1206), in *Huang-Sung chung-hsing liang-ch'ao sheng-cheng* (Sagacious Statecraft of the Two Revival Reigns of the Imperial Sung), in *Sung-shih tzu-liao ts'ui-pien* (A Compilation of Sung History Sources) (Taipei: Wen-hai Ch'u-pan-she, 1968), *chüan* 1, p. 382.
26. According to Ch'iao Ta's (active ca. 1250–1300) colophon, a copy of which is found at the end of the scroll in the Metropolitan Museum, there were four episodes in the first scroll: "Fleeing to Ti," "Passing Through Wei," "Arriving at Ch'i," and "Going to Ts'ao." See Wen C. Fong, *Sung and Yüan Paintings*, exhib. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), pp. 30–31, n. 16.
27. See *Shodō zenshū* (Compilation of Calligraphic Works), n.s., vol. 16 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1955), pls. 4–9, especially pls. 8, 9.
28. See Richard Edwards, "The Landscape Art of Li T'ang," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 12 (1958), pp. 48–60; and Richard M. Barnhart, "Li T'ang (c. 1050–c. 1130) and the Kōtō-in Landscapes," *Burlington Magazine* 114 (May 1972), pp. 305–14.
29. See Robert A. Rorex and Wen C. Fong, *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1974).
30. See Roderick Whitfield, "Chang Tse-tuan's *Ch'ing-ming Shang-ho t'u*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1965); see also Whitfield, "Chang Tse-tuan's *Ch'ing-ming Shang-ho t'u*," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 18–24 June 1970* (Taipei, 1972), pp. 351–88.
31. See Julia K. Murray, "Sung Kao-tsung, Ma Ho-chih, and the *Mao Shih* Scrolls: Illustrations of the *Classic of Poetry*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1981); and Xu Bangda, "The *Mao-shih* Scrolls: Authenticity and Other Issues," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 267–88.
32. See Pauline R. Yu, "Allegory, Allegoresis, and the *Classic of Poetry*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 2 (1983), pp. 377–412.
33. See Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-hai* (Ocean of Jade) (reprint, Taipei: Hua-wen Shu-chü, 1967), *chüan* 43/22, p. 855.
34. Ibid.
35. See Chou Mi, *Wu-lin chiu-shih* (Old Tales of Hangchow; ca. 1280), *chüan* 6, p. 18a, in *Chih-pu-tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* (Collectanea of the Studio of Never Learning Enough; preface dated 1776) (reprint, Taipei: Hsing-chung Shu-chü, 1964).
36. Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien* (Precious Mirror of Painting; preface dated 1365), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 4, p. 95.
37. See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 4, *The She King*, part 1, pp. 226–43.
38. Ibid., pp. 233–35.
39. See Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-hai*, *chüan* 34/19, p. 680; also Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* (Chronology of Key Events Since the Chien-yen Reign at the Beginning of the Southern Sung) (Taipei: Wen-hai Ch'u-pan-she, 1967), *chüan* 94, pp. 2a–b.
40. After translation in Legge, *Chinese Classics*, vol. 4, *She King*, part 2, pp. 292–93.
41. Andrew M. Watsky, a graduate student at Princeton University, presented a fine seminar report on this scroll in December 1988.
42. Translation adapted from Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes: Chinese Text, Transcription, and Translation* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), pp. 96–99.
43. Ibid.
44. See Otto Franke, *Kêng tschi t'u: Ackerbau und Seidengewinnung in China*, Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut, Abhandlungen, Reihe B, Völkerkunde, Kulturgeschichte, und Sprachen, 8 (Hamburg: L. Friederichsen, 1913); also *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art*, exhib. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 78–80.

45. See Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (Miscellanea of Court Affairs Since the Chien-yen Reign; dated 1202), reprinted in *Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu* (Collection of Basic Chinese Works) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937), part 1, *chüan* 1.
46. See Lou Yüeh, *Kung-k'uei chi* (Collected Works [of Lou Yüeh]) (Taipei: Shang-wu Yin-shu-kuan, 1967), *chüan* 69, p. 632.
47. See Nishikawa Yasushi, "Sō Kōsō no shinsō senjimon" (Sung Kao-tsung's *Thousand-Character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts*), *Shohin*, no. 208 (April 1970), pp. 2–8 and pls. 9–61.
48. First published in Shan-tung-sheng Po-wu-kuan (Shantung Provincial Museum), "Fa-chüeh Chu T'an mu chi-shih" (Report on the Excavation of the Tomb of Chu T'an), *Wen-wu*, no. 5 (1972), pp. 25–36.
49. See Hui-liang Chu, "Nan-Sung huang-shih shu-fa" (Southern Sung Imperial Calligraphy), *Ku-kung hsüeh-shu chi-k'an* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1985), p. 31.
50. For another reading of the poem, see Kwan S. Wong, *Masterpieces of Sung and Yüan Dynasty Calligraphy from the John M. Crawford, Jr., Collection*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1981), p. 36.
51. See Hui-liang Chu, "Nan-Sung huang-shih shu-fa," p. 31.
52. See entry no. 19 in *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Collection of Crawford*, p. 79.
53. See Tseng Yu-ho Ecke, *Chinese Calligraphy*, exhib. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1971), no. 26; and Wan-go Weng, *Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, a Pictorial Survey: 69 Fine Examples from the John M. Crawford, Jr., Collection* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), p. 28.
54. See Hui-liang Chu, "Nan-Sung huang-shih shu-fa," pls. 31–33.
55. See Chiang Chao-shen, "The Identity of Yang Mei-tzu and the Paintings of Ma Yüan," parts 1, 2, in *National Palace Museum Bulletin* (Taipei) 2, no. 2 (May 1967), pp. 1–15, and no. 3 (July 1967), pp. 8–13; also Chiang Chao-shen, *Shuang-ch'i t'u-hua sui-pi* (Notes on Studying Paintings at the Double Stream) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1977), pp. 10–38.
56. See Hans Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretation of Chinese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), chap. 1; and Maggie Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1985), pp. 55–56.
57. Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition: Chiang K'uei and Southern Sung Tz'u Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 8, 12.
58. Adapted from a translation by Adele Rickett.



5 Introspection and Lyricism: Southern Sung Painting

Southern Sung art, because it was dominated by the court, must be seen against the political and intellectual climate of the time. Devastated by their loss of northern China to the Chin invaders, the Southern Sung emperor Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62) and his conservative ministers held the reform policies of 1069–85 and their reapplication in 1093–1125 responsible for the rapid decline of the Northern Sung. Rather than trying to initiate further institutional changes, they renewed the appeal of Neo-Confucian morality as a way of revitalizing the empire. After the humiliating peace treaty with the Jurchen Chin in 1141, Kao-tsung, intent on consolidating his personal rule, established an increasingly absolutist and repressive government.

After Kao-tsung's successor, Emperor Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162–89), renegotiated and improved the peace terms with the Chin in 1165, Southern Sung China enjoyed a full century of growth and prosperity. During that time, however, two crises in the imperial succession severely damaged the moral authority of the court: the deposing, in 1194, of the mentally ill emperor Kuang-tsung (r. 1189–94) in favor of his son Ning-tsung (r. 1194–1224) and a palace coup in 1225 following the death of Ning-tsung, who died without an heir, which resulted in the installation of Li-tsung (r. 1224–64).[1]

For conservative Southern Sung scholars and thinkers, who believed that the only answer to the ills of society was moral transformation, disenchantment with court affairs typically led to an increased focus on self-cultivation through meditation and philosophical reflection on human affairs. When Emperor Hsiao-tsung ascended the throne in 1162, the great Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi advised that the new ruler expel the Jurchen Chin, follow the Confucian practice of "the investigation of things leading to the perfection of knowledge," and place only men of high moral principle in office.[2] Chu Hsi and his followers, in their Neo-Confucian philosophy, known as the School of Tao (*Tao-hsüeh*), established the concept of *Tao-t'ung*, or the Orthodox Lineage of the Tao, in which they claimed direct lineage from the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun, through Confucius and Mencius, and the early Northern Sung Neo-Confucianists. Emperor Li-tsung, in an attempt to bolster the image of the court, appointed scholars of the School of Tao to high court office, and to strengthen the Southern Sung claim as the legitimate heir to the Confucian state, he proclaimed Neo-Confucianism, now designated the School of Principles, the official philosophy of the state.

Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). Detail from *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall* (pl. 51)

With the threat of first Chin, then Mongol, invasion looming on its northern border, and government officials preferring stability and inaction to innovation and change, Southern Sung China turned increasingly inward. In Southern Sung painting, the deepening introspection is reflected in a gradual shift of imagery from a realistic rendition of nature to a symbolic representation of single flowers, rocks, and trees.

A Fisherman's Lodge

By the late twelfth century, Lin-an, the Southern Sung capital, was not only a great metropolis of wealth and commerce but also a cultural haven of refined living and elegant taste.[3] Wedged between West Lake, the Che estuary, and the Eastern Sea (Map 4), the city lacked the spaciousness and symmetry of an ideal imperial capital; its natural beauty, however, was unparalleled. Thirteenth-century eyewitness accounts of the city, including that of the Venetian traveler Marco Polo (who called it "the finest city in the world"), describe the great amenities of urban life: fine taverns and restaurants, pleasure houses, shops specializing in every luxury and exotic product imaginable, and goods from all over China and other parts of the world.[4] West Lake, always decked with gaily decorated pleasure boats and humming day and night with the clatter of banquets and festivities, was surrounded by Buddhist and Taoist temples and magnificent villas and gardens. Many owners of private estates vied with one another in their extravagant life-styles and lavish entertaining. A leading aristocrat of the day, Chang Tzu, who modestly styled himself the Master of the Studio of Frugality, for example, resided in a palatial retreat situated north of the city that comprised some eighty buildings, bridges, and artificial ponds, where he held no fewer than one hundred thirty-seven feasts and outings in a single year.[5]

With factionalism within the palace making official careers ever more hazardous and unrewarding, life away from the pressures of court, a life of reclusion and often of luxury as well, became much desired. For these wealthy aristocrats and scholar-officials, however, the objective of a reclusive life was, in the words of the modern scholar Shuen-fu Lin, "not pleasure but refinement . . . the pristine and transparent state of being."[6]

Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai (pl. 43), formerly attributed to Wang Shen (ca. 1036–after 1104), is the work of the Southern Sung scholar-official, poet, and painter Li Chieh (ca. 1124–after 1191).[7] Born in Ho-yang, Honan Province, shortly before the Jurchen Chin invasion, Li Chieh was given the name Chieh by his father in tribute to the T'ang dynasty recluse poet Yüan Chieh (723–772); the political climate around 1124 was already ominous enough for the elder Li to project a life of reclusion for his newborn son. Despite his father's prediction, however, Li Chieh, after immigrating to the south and earning his *chin-shih* degree in the early 1150s, went on to serve the Southern Sung court, both at provincial posts and in the capital. In the 1180s, he built near Lake T'ai in the Hsi-sai Mountains, Chekiang Province, a retreat



Map 4. The Southern Sung Capital, Lin-an (Hangchow), ca. 1250

for himself and his family called the Fisherman's Lodge, which he also used as a meeting place for his poetry club. In 1190, after a final government assignment in Szechwan, Li retired to the Fisherman's Lodge. He died there after 1191.

Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai was painted about 1170, before the lodge was actually built. It has colophons dated from 1185 to 1191, written at Li's request by seven of the best-known and most successful scholar-officials of the day. Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126–1193) was special Sung envoy to the Chin in 1170, minister of state in 1179, and a leading calligrapher, poet, naturalist, and author of travelogues; Hung Mai (1123–1202) was a special envoy to the Chin in 1162 and subchancellor of the Han-lin College; Chou Pi-ta (1126–1204) was prime minister in 1187; Chao Hsiung (1129–1193), another envoy to the Chin, was prime minister in 1178; Wang Lin (1128–1192) was prime minister in 1190, and so on. Thus, the painting by Li, together with its impressive colophons, constitutes an extraordinary artistic and social document of Southern Sung scholar-official culture.

Because *Fisherman's Lodge* was painted before the lodge was built, it does not represent an actual place, but rather a projection by the artist. A landscape in the archaic blue-and-green style, it depicts a country home modeled after the prototypical image of a scholar's retreat, *Wang-ch'uan Villa* (fig. 27), done



by the eighth-century T'ang poet and painter Wang Wei. Unlike Li Kung-lin's *Dwelling in the Lung-mien Mountains* (fig. 106), which was also inspired by Wang Wei's composition but which describes specific topographical features of a real site, Li Chieh's imaginary landscape is symbolic and unspecific. Li Chieh's property, situated between the Cha and T'iao streams, was built at the site of the home of the famous eighth-century T'ang recluse poet and painter Chang Chih-ho (active ca. 756–62), known as the Fisherman of Misty Breakers; hence the name Fisherman's Lodge.

The painting shows a lakeside villa surrounded by hills (pl. 43a). On the shore are weeping willows and fir trees, and on the lake a scholar in a skiff drifts by dense clusters of lotus leaves. The style of the landscape, built up with soft round dots, recalls the manner of Tung Yüan's *The Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers* (fig. 107), long praised by Mi Fu as expressive of the reposeful landscapes of the south and the elegant "plain and natural" taste of the scholar-artist.[8] As a symbolic landscape the quiet, undramatic image thus reflects, through identifiable historical and stylistic allusions, the deeply cherished cultural ideal of reclusion.

Li Chieh sent the painting to his friends, asking if they would contribute comments or colophons, and in effect calling for a gathering in absentia. This exchange of literary and artistic works among friends followed in a long tradi-

Pl. 43. Li Chieh (ca. 1124–after 1191). *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai*, ca. 1170. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 16 x 53⅜ in. (40.7 x 135.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.10)

Overleaf
Pl. 43a. Detail, pl. 43



Fig. 106. After Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *Dwelling in the Lung-mien Mountains.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 11⅜ x 143½ in. (28.9 x 364.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

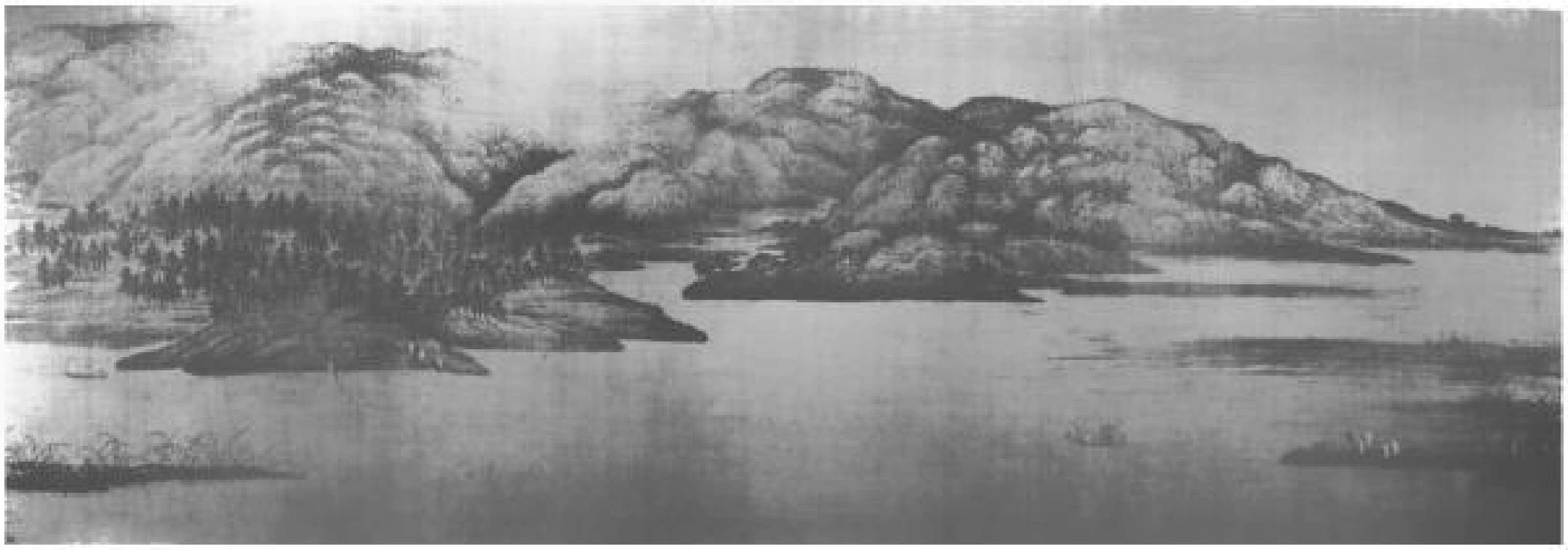
tion that was begun at Wang Hsi-chih's famous literary meeting at the Orchid Pavilion in A.D. 353, when a group of friends gathered to create a collection of poems.

Fan Ch'eng-ta, who wrote the first colophon for *Fisherman's Lodge*, carefully sets the artistic and literary standard. His calligraphic essay (fig. 108),









dated 1185 and written in a bold running script, is both a visual and verbal accompaniment to Li's painting, explicating and enhancing the image and placing it in a personal and historical context. In the colophon Fan recalls how, when he and Li Chieh first met as young officials in Anhwei in the 1150s, they already spoke of their longing for retirement. By this time, Fan had retired and was no longer in good health:

> Although [Li Chieh] built his Fisherman's Lodge later in his life than I, he is in good health and can still take care of his parents. . . . I am ten thousand times more envious of [Li Chieh] than he once was of me. I hope my illness will subside. When the peach blossoms bloom and the streams are flowing, I shall sail to Hsi-sai in a skiff and ask him to buy fish and wine. We shall sing songs of the oars, write verses along the streams, and invite young fishermen and woodcutters to come sing with us. . . . With emerald waters reaching to the sky and the sound of the rain beating on the thatched awning, we shall enjoy a nap after drinking. What a wonderful way to renew our friendship!

Fan's calligraphy shows the stylistic influence of the late Northern Sung masters Huang T'ing-chien and Mi Fu, both of whom were popular among Southern Sung scholar-artists. Compared with the brushwork of both Huang and Mi, however, Fan's is relatively flat and lacking in variation (figs. 109a–c). Typ-

Fig. 107. After Tung Yüan (died 962). *The Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers.* Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 19¾ x 55⅝ in. (50 x 141.4 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Fig. 108. Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126–1193). Detail of a colophon to Li Chieh's *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai*, dated 1185 (pl. 43)

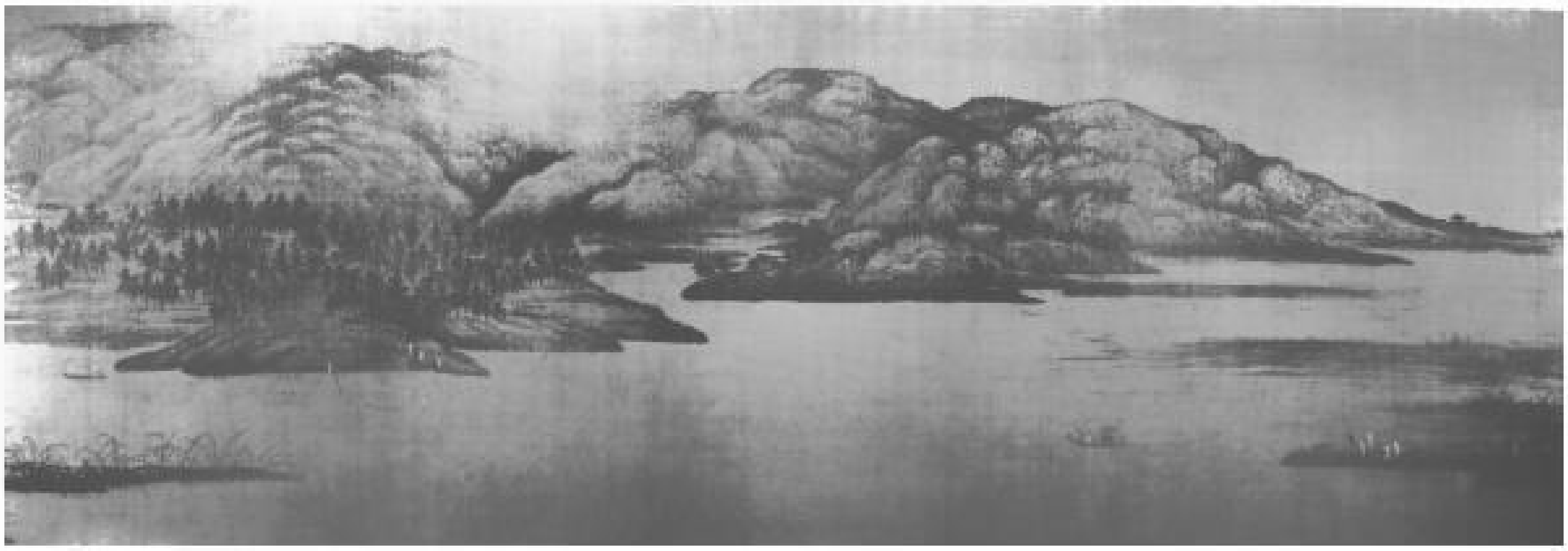


Fig. 109a. Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126–1193). Detail of a colophon to *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai* (fig. 108)

Fig. 109b. Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105). Detail from *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung* (see also fig. 60)

Fig. 109c. Mi Fu (1052–1107). Detail from *Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River* (pl. 19a)



a b c

ical of Southern Sung calligraphy it emphasizes, in an expressive and informal script, broad movement rather than the articulation of individual characters.

The next colophon, dated 1188, is written by Hung Mai. Hung writes that his father once owned a painting of a fisherman by the eighth-century recluse painter Chang Chih-ho, in which

> the landscape looked like the Hsi-sai Mountains. . . . [Li Chieh] has now acquired this property. Because we can no longer visit with Chang Chih-ho, we shall have to settle for visiting with Li. And if we cannot actually go to the Hsi-sai Mountains, we shall have to settle for viewing Li's painting *Fisherman's Lodge*!

In several of the colophons, there are references to the vicissitudes of Li's career as well as veiled expressions of envy of his worldly successes. Though considered an exceptionally able official, Li had led a checkered career, having twice been relieved of his duties, first in the late 1160s and again in 1179; as a result, he did not enjoy a consistent friendship with many of the grandees of the court. Writing his colophon in 1190, Chou Pi-ta recalled that when Li first brought the painting to him in 1170, he had declined the invitation to write an inscription because "working in the [bustle of the] capital, I found it difficult to say anything about [the beauties of] the streams and mountains of Hsi-sai." In 1190, now that Li was "the imperial secretary in charge of [the finances of] the whole of Szechwan, with officials and clerks from sixty-one prefectures and hundreds of thousands in the military under his jurisdiction," Chou, himself retired, queried: "How can this be your time to talk about reclusion?"

Chao Hsiung, also retired, wrote his colophon in 1190, on the day of the winter solstice:

> This is Wu-hsing's scenery at its best. . . . When I think of my own place, how rustic it seems! . . . But [Li Chieh's] talent and ability are just now beginning to be used. Our emperor, having just ascended the throne, has promoted him. How can he be a hermit at his Fisherman's Lodge?

Finally, Wang Lin recalls in his colophon, dated 1191, how years before he had visited and admired the ancient site of Chang Chih-ho's retreat at Hsi-sai and was surprised to find that Li Chieh had acquired that famous property. When Li first asked him in 1183 (soon after his second disgrace) to write a colophon, Wang too had declined. But now, with Li visiting him after his retirement, he writes:

> Since I know that [Li Chieh] is as honest and as poor as I am, I assumed that his new Fisherman's Lodge would not be too grand. So I asked him about his plans, and he replied: "I shall have the pines and thickets removed, and shall build some dozen simple structures. . . . If I wanted something more grand . . . I would have to wait for the Yellow River to clear." I clapped my hands and laughed, saying, "Then your painting *A Fisherman's Lodge* is but a figment of your imagination! Do you remember how you laughed at my rusticity?" [Li,] too, laughed, and said, "You can write all this down [on my scroll]!"

The Southern Sung Painting Academy

Professional court painting under the Southern Sung flourished for three generations following the reestablishment of the Painting Academy in Lin-an in the 1140s. The first generation of artists, under Emperors Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung, followed in the late Northern Sung tradition of representational realism and poetic evocation in painting. Under Emperor Ning-tsung, in the early thirteenth century, a second generation emerged with its own distinctive idioms, developing through meditative introspection a lyric style that became the hallmark of the Southern Sung. Finally, under Emperor Li-tsung, from the 1220s through the middle of the thirteenth century, a third generation of court painters brought representational realism to a climactic finish while at the same time inaugurating a new age of symbolic painting.

Southern Sung Academy painting continued to express the highest Sung ideals of *wen,* or a moral and cultural order, albeit in a manner more circumscribed and self-contained than first conceived in the early years of the Northern Sung. Because the Academy recruited fresh talent from provincial painters' guilds, the Academy painting style continued to draw inspiration from popular life and beliefs, so that while it catered to the refined taste of the aristocracy, it managed to retain a popular character. It remained an art of representation and moral and political ideals, of visual beauty and technical and material splendor.

The Painting Academy Under Emperors Kao-tsung and Hsiao-tsung (mid-1140s–89)

By the middle of the twelfth century, the shift from the monumental landscape painting of the Northern Sung to the narrowly focused and intimate vision of the Southern Sung was complete. If large wall hangings best express the heroic spirit of the early Northern Sung and long handscrolls and narrative paintings best represent the perspective of the late Northern and early Southern Sung, it is the intimate format of round silk fans and square album leaves (each about ten inches in diameter or across) that reflects the sensibilities of the Southern Sung. Here, paintings on silk fans appeared as art objects, to be carried and held in hand, enjoyed for their beauty as well as used for practical purpose. The circle and the square, ancient Chinese symbols for heaven and earth, were ideal shapes for pictorial designs that could be taken in at a single glance; the composition, in a round or square format, comprising a balance of yin and yang elements, could be seen as a mirror of life forces both physical and spiritual.

Southern Sung silk fans were decorated with painting on one side and calligraphy on the other, with the image and the words enhancing each other. Li Ch'eng-sou, in his essay on landscape painting (preface dated 1221), commented, "In painting, in early times, what could not be said in words was said in painting. Now it is the reverse. What cannot be expressed in painting is said in words."[9] Li also saw landscape composition as an interplay between solids (*shih*) and voids (*hsü*): "[One must] seek the void amid the solid . . . and the solid within the void . . . filling the void and breaking up the solid."[10] In Southern Sung landscape painting, blank space plays a defining role in a composition and contributes its own presence.

Hermitage by a Pine-Covered Bluff (pl. 44), a fan painting attributed to Yen Tz'u-yü (active ca. 1164–81), shows a cottage at the base of a rocky bluff that rises out of an inlet overgrown with tall reeds. The scene is perhaps at the mouth of the Ch'ien-t'ang River outside Lin-an, not far from the Eastern Sea. Yen Tz'u-yü, whose father was a member of Hui-tsung's Academy, was himself a member of the Academy and a recipient of the Golden Girdle under Emperor Hsiao-tsung in the 1160s. A follower of Li T'ang, his style, as exemplified in *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist* (fig. 110), shows rock forms rendered in small ax-cut strokes.

The solidly modeled rocky cliff in *Hermitage by a Pine-Covered Bluff* recalls the Northern Sung high-distance compositions of Fan K'uan (fig. 30) and Li T'ang (fig. 79), but here the earlier compartmentalized treatment of space has been replaced by a unified composition. The view is compressed into the near distance, with the world beyond the cliff obliterated by mist. The mood of the sultry summer scene is quiet and serene. Compared with Li Chieh's *Fisherman's Lodge* (pl. 43), which shows pleasure pavilions that suggest activity within, Yen Tz'u-yü's landscape, which probably illustrated a now lost poem on reclusion that was mounted on the other side of the fan, is secluded and

mysterious; no figures are about, and the thatched cottage is hidden among trees, behind a fence, bringing to mind lines by the early fifth-century recluse T'ao Ch'ien:

> Daily I stroll contentedly in my garden;
> There is a gate, but it is always shut.[11]

Towing a Boat in a Rainstorm (pl. 45), by an unidentified late twelfth-century artist who painted in the highly animated, thickening-and-thinning brush idiom of Kuo Hsi (pl. 11), captures within a circle of less than twelve inches in diameter the timeless human struggle against the forces of nature, exemplified by two laborers in a violent storm pulling a loaded boat upstream. In 1121, Han Cho, a member of Hui-tsung's Academy, modified the Northern Sung landscape compositional patterns set down by Kuo Hsi—high distance, level distance, and deep distance—proposing an alternative scheme:

> The viewing of far-reaching distant mountains from the nearby shore of a broad expanse of water is the "wide distance." Vast, hazy wilderness mists with running streams that intersect each other and then disappear is the "lost distance." And where landscape elements diminish with distance, becoming tiny and disappearing in space, is the "remote distance."[12]



Fig. 110. Yen Tz'u-yü (active ca. 1164–81). *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist.* Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 10 x $10\frac{3}{16}$ in. 25.3 x 25.8 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (35.10)



Pl. 44. Attributed to Yen Tz'u-yü (active ca. 1164–81). *Hermitage by a Pine-Covered Bluff.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 8⅜ x 9 in. (21.3 x 22.8 cm). Purchase, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Milbank and Gift of Mary Phelps Smith, in memory of Howard Caswell Smith, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.12)

Han Cho's scheme, a division based less on physical space than on atmosphere and its psychological dimension, was well suited to the lyrical vision of the Southern Sung painters.

Another open composition is seen in *Egrets in Water Reeds* (pl. 46), by an unidentified late twelfth-century painter, which recalls Ma Ho-chih's *Wild Geese* (pl. 29), an image that symbolized the reestablishment of peace under the Southern Sung. Here, a family of egrets on a marshy bank is joined by three egrets alighting from the sky. Bamboo and reeds in the foreground, executed in a beautifully controlled rounded brushwork, bend in the breeze. The birds and swaying bamboo define at once the finite world within the picture and the vast world beyond.



Sparrows, Plum Blossoms, and Bamboo (pl. 47), which dates from the same period, continues in the tradition of Hui-tsung's *Finches and Bamboo* (pl. 22). A fine interlace of branches, leaves, flowers, and birds fills the circular space of the silk fan, but within the delicately balanced composition resides a dynamic tension as the nervously alert sparrows do not rest but merely pause on the springy branches. As a pair of sparrows watches from the left, a third on the right holds in its bill a coiled strand of grass. A master of detail, the painter lavishes studied care on every petal, twig, and feather, transforming the natural forms into a language of visual signs and creating a miniature universe where things tiny and colorful loom large and significant, emblems of the endless cosmic pattern of creation.

Pl. 45. Unidentified artist (late 12th century). *Towing a Boat in a Rainstorm.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 9½ x 10⅛ in. (24.1 x 25.7 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.83)



Pl. 46. Unidentified artist (late 12th century). *Egrets in Water Reeds.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9 15/16 x 10 5/16 in. (25.3 x 26.2 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.77)

Two Birds on a Wintry Tree (pl. 48), attributed to Li Ti (ca. 1110–after 1197), shows a pair of scissors-tailed birds perched on a gnarled, snow-covered tree growing on a ledge above a cascade. The fan painting compares closely in its composition with an album leaf, *Birds in a Tree Above a Cataract* (fig. 111), a painting signed by Li Ti. A consummate draftsman, Li Ti, a deputy director of the Academy, was the leading flower, bird, and animal painter of the last quarter of the twelfth century. His album leaves *A Large Dog Walking* and *Two Chicks Waiting to Be Fed*, both dated 1197 and in the Palace Museum, Beijing, are masterpieces of realism. The two pictures of paired birds are occasional paintings, given as birthday gifts to elderly couples. The birds are known as *shou-tai*, or longevity birds: each has a white head, a white stomach, and two





Pl. 47. Unidentified artist (late 12th century). *Sparrows, Plum Blossoms, and Bamboo.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 10⅛ x 10½ in. (25.7 x 26.8 cm). Bequest of Mary Clark Thompson, 1923 (24.80.487)

long tail feathers, which symbolize longevity lines (*shou-tai*), the lines around the mouth of an elderly person. The ancient tree, though leafless in winter, is still full of vigor and energy. The stillness of the scene is enlivened by the water rushing beneath the birds, which symbolizes life eternal. Despite the winter motif, the scene exudes the cozy warmth of domestic bliss.

A less serene side of nature is depicted in *Gibbons Raiding an Egret's Nest* (pl. 49), also by a late twelfth-century master, which shows gibbons stealing the young in an egret's nest.[13] The graceful shape of the anguished mother egret is echoed in the raised arm of the gibbon sitting atop the tree. The meanspiritedness of the taunting gesture is matched, paradoxically, by the exquisite beauty of the drawing.

The Painting Academy Under Emperor Ning-tsung (1194–1224)

The genius of Southern Sung Academy painting is seen most clearly in the works of the Ma family, which for five generations dominated the Academy. Ma Fen (born ca. 1060), a native of Ho-chung, Shansi Province, was a member of Emperor Hui-tsung's Academy and a specialist in bird and animal painting. After the Chin invasion, his son Ma Hsing-tsu (born ca. 1080) went south, serving both as a member of Kao-tsung's restored Painting Academy in Lin-an and as a connoisseur-adviser to the emperor. About the same time, Hsing-tsu's sons Kung-hsien (born ca. 1110) and Shih-jung (born ca. 1120) were also made members of the Academy.[14] Shih-jung's son Ma Yüan (born ca. 1150), in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, became the premier

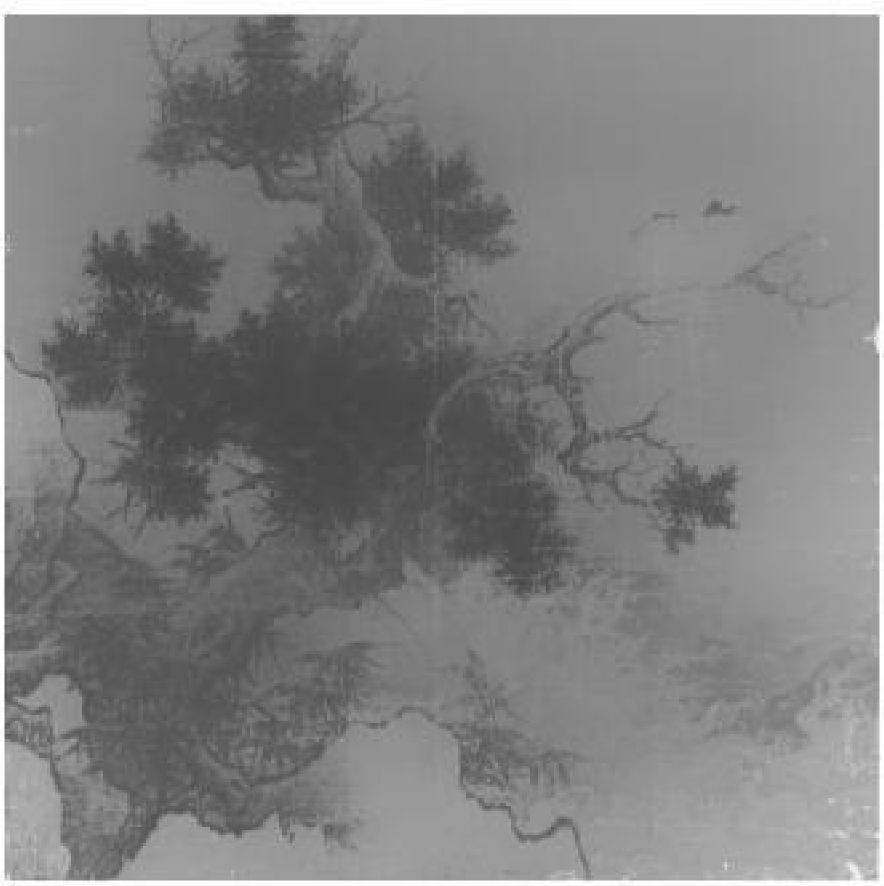
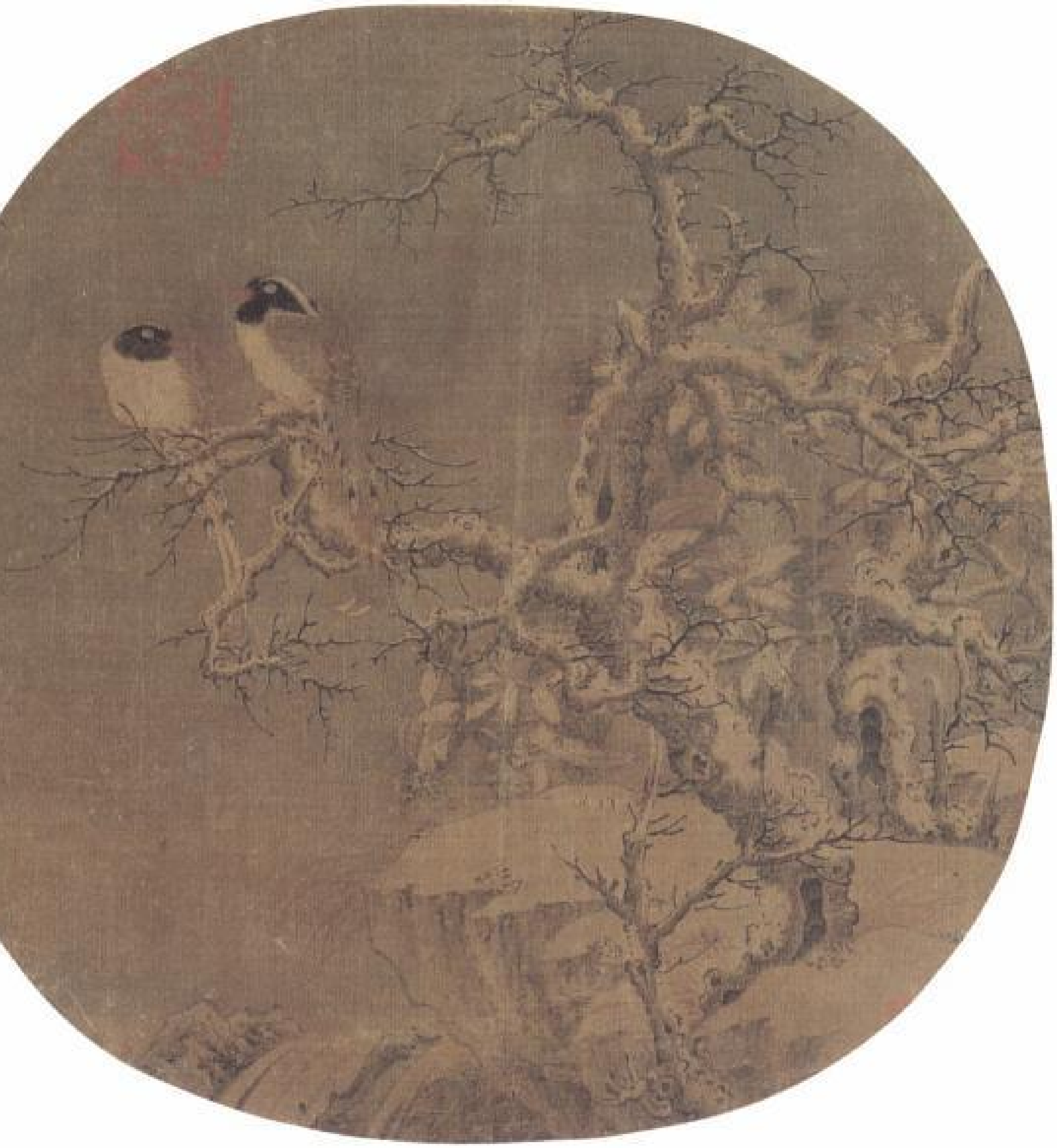


Fig. 111. Li Ti (ca. 1110–after 1197). ***Birds in a Tree Above a Cataract.*** Album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 9¾ x 10¼ in. (24.8 x 26 cm). Mr. and Mrs. A. Dean Perry Collection, The Cleveland Museum of Art (64.155)



Pl. 48. Attributed to Li Ti (ca. 1110–after 1197). *Two Birds on a Wintry Tree.* Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⅜ x 9½ in. (23.7 x 24.1 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.15)



Pl. 49. Unidentified artist (late 12th century). *Gibbons Raiding an Egret's Nest.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9½ x 9 in. (24.1 x 22.8 cm). John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.100.104)

painter of the Academy under Emperors Kuang-tsung and Ning-tsung, and was especially favored by Ning-tsung's wife, Empress Yang Mei-tzu (1162–1232). Finally, Ma Yüan's son Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256) led the Academy under Emperor Li-tsung through the middle of the thirteenth century.

Since very little is known about even the most celebrated of the Southern Sung Academy painters, extant paintings are the only evidence of their activities. The Ma family commanded a wide repertory of subjects—figures, landscapes, and a variety of bird-and-flower genres. In *Meeting Between Yao-shan and Li Ao* (fig. 112), a late twelfth-century painting signed by Ma Yüan's uncle Ma Kung-hsien,[15] the famous encounter between the Confucian scholar Li Ao (died ca. 840) and the Ch'an Buddhist master Yao-shan takes place beneath the branches of a great pine tree. The setting recalls the meeting between Prince Ch'ung-erh and his retainer Tzu-fan in Li T'ang's *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State* (fig. 113). Indeed, Ma Kung-hsien's brush technique, in both his figures and landscape elements, derives from Li T'ang, who in turn followed Li Kung-lin. Ma Kung-hsien's angular drapery technique, which reflects that of Li Kung-lin, in which rounded, centered brushstrokes begin with a knobby "nailhead" before breaking into crisp, angular folds (fig. 23), was followed by other Ma family painters.

Extant works by Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225) include Confucian and Ch'an Buddhist portraits, narrative compositions, landscapes with figures, flowers and birds, and series paintings of water and flowering plum. His paintings are profoundly influenced by Buddhism. Developing traditional Buddhist themes, they transform popular narrative images into deeply meditative ones. *The Ch'an Monk Tung-shan Wading a Stream* (fig. 114), with a poem by Empress Yang Mei-tzu, for example, treats the subject of a Buddhist monk crossing the water.[16] In traditional Buddhist iconography, as seen in *Lohans Crossing over a Stream* (fig. 115), from the *Five Hundred Lohans,* dated 1178, by the artisan painter Chou Chi-ch'ang,[17] the depiction is a supernatural drama of the lohans flying over the stream, with whirling clouds and trees and rushing water. By contrast, Ma Yüan's simple meditative image shows a humble mendicant monk on foot traveling across the empty space in solitude.

Buddhist influence was all-pervasive in Southern Sung culture and society. In popular Buddhist imagery, the lohans (worthies or saints; *arhats,* in Sanskrit), as Buddha's disciples, are shown in one of two positions, one standing or walking and the other seated. These represent two paths to enlightenment: the former path, exemplified here as the "monk traveling on foot" (*hsing-chiao-seng*), achieved through living an active life of hard work and varied experience in the real world, and the latter, achieved by way of the cultivation of the mind through meditation and the contemplation of natural phenomena.

According to the T'ien-t'ai sect of Buddhism, a school influential in the formation of Ch'an Buddhism, Buddha-nature is found in all things and actions. Even the tiniest particle of dust and the humblest act in life is deemed worthy of meditation, which leads to spiritual enlightenment. T'ien-t'ai Buddhism taught the threefold truth: first, all events and things of the phenomenal

world are void, empty, and unreal; second, all things enjoy a temporal existence as transient phenomena; finally, the synthesis of emptiness and phenomenal existence, of universality and particularity, is known as the truth of the mean, or middle. Hence, enlightenment is achieved through a threefold meditation: on the empty and immaterial; on all created things in their state of transiency; and on the mean, on both the real and the empty. There is total interpenetration and identification between the parts and the whole, between all the *dharmas*, or laws, and the ultimate cosmic unity; Buddha-nature is present in a single strand of hair or in a grain of sand, or as a T'ien-t'ai master would put it, "one thought is the [*sic*] three thousand worlds."[18]

In *Lohans Watching a Stag* (fig. 116), from the *Five Hundred Lohans*, five lohans are seen gathered on a porch to meditate on a stag or goat. An enco-



Fig. 112. Ma Kung-hsien (active ca. 1130s–1160s). *Meeting Between Yao-shan and Li Ao*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 45⅝ x 19⅛ in. (115.9 x 48.5 cm). Nanzenji, Kyoto



Fig. 113. Li T'ang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s). *Duke Wen of Chin Recovering His State*. Detail, "Tzu-fan Presenting a Jade Disk" (pl. 26c)



Fig. 114. Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). *The Ch'an Monk Tung-shan Wading a Stream.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 30½ x 13 in. (77.6 x 33 cm). Tokyo National Museum



Fig. 115. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Crossing over a Stream,* from *Five Hundred Lohans,* set of 100 paintings, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto



Fig. 116. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Watching a Stag,* from *Five Hundred Lohans,* datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

mium dated 1115, by the early twelfth-century Buddhist monk Te-hung, describes a similar image of a lohan seated under a tree:

> Even the tree begs for the Law [*dharma*],
> By offering its trunk as a seat;
> Even the stag shows a donor's heart,
> By presenting a flower from the hill.[79]

Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight (pl. 50), a signed fan painting dating to the turn of the thirteenth century, is a representation by Ma Yüan of the viewing of, and meditation on, flowering plum trees. Ma Yüan derives his landscape motifs and ax-cut texture strokes from Li T'ang (fig. 87), a founder of the Southern Sung Painting Academy. In Ma's painting, a scholar sits on a hilltop gazing at the moon through sparse, twisted plum branches, while a boy holding a zither stands behind him. Symbol of the recluse scholar in the mountains, the wild old plum, the first tree to blossom when winter still reigns, holds the promise of spring, much as the recluse holds the beacon of morality and the hope of renewal in times of political turmoil.[80] The delicately sensuous



Pl. 50. Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). *Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⅞ x 10½ in. (25.1 x 26.7 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., in honor of Alfreda Murck, 1986 (1986.493.2)

plum blossoms contrast dramatically with the rugged plum tree boughs, while the flower's brief bloom intensifies its fragility.

Lin-an, the home of the famous Plum Recluse Lin Pu (967–1028), a scholar who retired to grow plum trees and raise cranes on Mount Ku in West Lake, was the land of flowering plum during the Southern Sung. Here, the aesthetic of the plum blossom was avidly cultivated. The early thirteenth-century hedonist Chang Tzu, for example, planted a grove of three hundred flowering plum trees at his retreat in 1185 and catalogued methods for their care and contemplation.[21] *Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight* illustrates one of Chang Tzu's "fitting moments" for viewing plum blossoms, focusing on a splendid single plum tree in moonlight, with angular branches that twist back upon themselves, rendered in a strong yet unaggressive round brushwork. The tree echoes the words of the late twelfth-century Southern Sung poet Yang Wan-li: "The flowering plum in the grove is like the recluse, filled with the spirit of open space, free from the spirit of worldly dust."[22] The seated scholar, however, is no simple mountain recluse, but rather an elegant guest in Chang Tzu's garden of artifice (a thatched pavilion is seen in the lower right corner), where the Southern Sung cult of beauty is infused with the sadness and nostalgia of a diminished empire, a vanished utopia.

For Chang Tzu and his friends, Buddhist thought offered the perfect rationale for luxurious, even decadent, living. "If a man can keep his heart pure . . . [and] enter the undifferentiated meditation," Chang Tzu wrote, "then even if he is in a bedroom, or a wineshop, he can go through the stages of enlightenment; to listen to music and singing voices must be a communing with spiritual wisdom." Though wealthy, powerful, and immersed in palace intrigues, Chang Tzu believed that he cultivated a tranquil and luminous mind, "detached from all grasping and clinging." The goal of the cultured life should, in other words, be spiritual enlightenment, the liberation of the self from the material world.[23]



Fig. 117. After Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *T'ao Yüan-ming Returning to Seclusion*, 12th century. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 14 9/16 x 204 1/16 in. (37 x 518.5 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (19.119)





Fig. 118. Attributed to Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). *Banquet by Lantern Light.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44 x 21 in. (111.9 x 53.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Fig. 119. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Viewing a Waterfall,* from *Five Hundred Lohans,* datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

Unlike Chou Chi-ch'ang's narrative approach in representing the act of viewing (fig. 116), in Ma Yüan's painting the scholar is seated in profile and looks away, drawing us into a deep psychological space. Ma learned this compositional device from Li Kung-lin (fig. 117), who first introduced the meditating figure looking away from the viewer into space in his representation of T'ao Ch'ien's line:

[He] sit[s] by the clear stream and compose[s] a poem.[14]

Instead of depicting the scholar merely viewing plum blossoms, Ma projects onto the landscape the meditative experience of the scholar: the tree's rhythmic energy, echoed in the companion tree at the right and in the jutting hillock silhouetted at the left, becomes a metaphor for the Buddha's *dharma,* which permeates all things in the universe.

Ma Yüan's treatment of the moon is also significant in *Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight.* Since the time of Hui-tsung's Academy, nocturnal scenes had held a particular fascination for artists. Ma's *Banquet by Lantern Light* (fig. 118) shows the palace decked out for feasting under lantern light on a clear, cool night. Unlike the sun, which illuminates objects in sharp detail, the moon reveals form through essential shapes and patterns, here rendered in



Pl. 51. Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall.* Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⅞ x 10¼ in. (24.9 x 26 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.9)

Ma's crisp, spare brushwork. This in part explains the Southern Sung preference for scenes in monochrome, which fixes the viewer's attention on pure form.

Ma Yüan's *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall* (pl. 51), a signed album leaf dating to about 1220, shows a scholar standing under a large pine tree and watching the swirling waters at the foot of a waterfall; a boy with a double-knot coiffure waits behind, holding his cane. The picture echoes a Buddhist narrative image of lohans viewing waterfalls by Chou Chi-ch'ang (fig. 119). But unlike Chou's lohans, Ma's scholar and valet, protected from the cascade by a railing, are no intrepid mountain climbers, but rather introspective strollers in a garden. Barnhart has suggested that the painting recalls lines in a poem by the T'ang





Pl. 52. After Ma Yüan (active ca. 1190–1225). *Viewing the Moon Under a Pine Tree*, early 13th century. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 10 x 10 in. (25.4 x 25.4 cm). Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.33.5)

poet Li Po, "On Visiting a Taoist Master at the Tai-t'ien Mountains and Not Finding Him":

> Wild bamboo cuts across bright clouds,
> A flying cascade hangs from a green peak.
> No one knows where you have gone.
> In my melancholy, I have leaned against two,
> now three, pines.[11]

Ma Yüan has selected individual motifs, creating a painting that is in its approach like a verse of poetry. The large, dark pine is contrasted with the lighter deciduous tree with autumnal foliage; the bamboo leaves behind the large boulder are silhouetted against mist and clouds; and the scholar, delicately executed in halting round nailhead brushlines, gazes into the waters, seeking enlightenment through meditation on the wondrous variety of nature. Here brushwork and composition harmonize in a perfect union of style and meaning.

Viewing the Moon Under a Pine Tree (pl. 52), formerly attributed to Ma Yüan, repeats the motifs and brushwork of *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall*. A scholar, seated beneath a great pine tree, holds a zither in his lap, while a young attendant dozes nearby. Although the work lacks the psychic energy of the two earlier paintings, the relaxed yet forceful round brushwork suggests the hand of an early and close follower of the master.

The name Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230), that of a slightly later contemporary of Ma Yüan from Ch'ien-t'ang, Chekiang Province, is synonymous with Southern Sung landscape painting. As an Academy painter, Hsia Kuei, like Ma Yüan, derived his ax-cut brush idiom and compositional motifs from Li T'ang (fig. 87). But whereas Ma included human figures in landscape pictures, Hsia remained primarily a poet of pure landscape.

In *Streams and Mountains, Pure and Remote*, an unsigned handscroll more than thirty feet long, Hsia Kuei creates a monumental horizontal composition using Li T'ang's familiar motifs of pines and deciduous trees and ax-cut rocks.



Fig. 120. Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230). *Streams and Mountains, Pure and Remote*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 18¼ x 350 in. (46.5 x 889 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



In the handscroll format, the three compositional patterns of the early Northern Sung—level, high, and deep—are orchestrated into three horizontal movements, each with its own introduction and conclusion. Space remains compartmentalized, and disconnected silhouettes of mountain forms are united by the mist and void around them. In the beginning section at the right, bare boulders are shown with two contrasting kinds of trees, the spindly pine and the deciduous hardwood. To the left, a level-distance vista emerges

Pl. 53. Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230). *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist.* Album leaf, ink on silk, 9¾ x 8⅜ in. (24.8 x 21.3 cm). John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.100.102)



Fig. 121. Wang Hung (active ca. 1131–61). *Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers*, ca. 1150. Detail, "Mountain Market in Clearing Mist." Pair of handscrolls in eight sections, ink on silk, each section approx. 9¼ x 34½ in. (23.4 x 90.7 cm). Museum Purchase from the Edward L. Elliott Family Collection, The Fowler McCormick Fund, The Art Museum, Princeton University (1984-14)

with a monastery surrounded by oaks and pines. After an interval of blank space, a dramatic second movement begins with a great high-distance overhanging cliff (fig. 120). This is followed by a third movement, a deep-distance view of iciclelike mountain peaks standing silent in the mist. And finally, at the end of the scroll, a mountain village in the foreground brings the viewer back to a vantage point similar to that of the scene at the opening of the scroll.

But by far the majority of Hsia Kuei's extant landscapes are of a more intimate scale. *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist* (pl. 53), an album leaf signed by the artist, is one of the *Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers*. In the earliest extant set of the *Eight Views*, by the Southern Sung painter Wang Hung (active ca. 1131–61),[26] the same scene (fig. 121) shows a river view with people arriving by boat to barter goods at a mountain hamlet, while merchants carrying bags on shoulder poles gather between two rows of buildings on the river embankment. Wang Hung's earlier narrative approach is replaced in Hsia's painting by poetic evocation, of a mountain market in a clearing mist (*shan-shih ch'ing-lan*), executed in bold brushwork and ink dots that create an abstract language of visual signs. Hsia develops the familiar Li T'ang idiom of ax-cut rocks and pines and deciduous trees (fig. 87). His kinesthetic brushstrokes, which change effortlessly from outlines and foliage dots to wedge-shaped modeling strokes and ink wash, at once simplify and unify the composition, breathing life into the moisture-dampened landscape (pl. 53a).

It was this brilliantly simplified ink wash and ax-cut brush idiom, which infused gesture with meaning, that prepared the way for the mid-thirteenth-century splattered-ink vision of *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist*, by the



Fig. 122. Yü-chien (active mid-13th century). *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist.* Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 13 x 32⅝ in. (33.1 x 82.8 cm). Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo

Overleaf
Pl. 53a. Detail, pl. 53







Fig. 123. After Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230). *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist*, 14th century. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 39½ x 20 in. (100.3 x 50.7 cm). Kozo Yabumoto Collection, Hyōgo

Buddhist monk painter Yü-chien (fig. 122).[27] In both these paintings, the brushwork creates a yin-and-yang relationship of void to solid that transmutes itself directly into living forms rather than serving to shape, model, or decorate the forms. Landscape elements are united only by the mist and void, with no ground-plane structure to connect them. Hsia Kuei's inspired abbreviated style is much imitated but seldom equaled. A fourteenth-century follower of Hsia Kuei, for example, developed the composition into an ambitious monumental landscape with realistically modeled details (fig. 123), but turned the ax-cut brush idiom into a surface pattern that is lifeless and conventional.

Windswept Lakeshore (pl. 54), an unsigned fan painting by Hsia Kuei, is a prototypical Southern Sung one-corner riverscape bounded by a distant moun-

tain silhouette. The compositional simplicity seen here was anticipated by Li Kung-lin, who showed a similar river scene at the end of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (fig. 124).[28] The subject of Hsia Kuei's painting has been identified by Barnhart as two friends at their moment of farewell. A bent figure walks dejectedly away on the shore while another man, overcome by emotion, kneels prostrate in the boat.[29] Few scenes in Chinese life called for public displays of emotion like that of friends' parting before a journey. It was a theme memorialized in poems, ballads, and music. In one of the most famous poems of farewell, the T'ang poet Wang Wei spoke the immortal lines:

> Come, let us empty one more cup of wine,
> For once west of the Yang Pass, you will have no old friends.[30]

Ever since the opening of the Silk Road under the Han dynasty, the Yang Pass, near Tun-huang at the western end of the Kansu corridor, represented the outer limits of China proper. Because it was likely that anyone traveling so far would never return, the Yang Pass came to symbolize exile and farewell. When Li Kung-lin painted *The Yang Pass* as a gift for a departing friend, the picture gained instant celebrity among Li's friends. The composition, which no longer survives, portrayed a scene of farewell before a journey on land, a scene that became standard during the late Northern Sung. After the move of the Sung capital to the south, when journeys on the river became more common, a new composition, showing a scene of farewell before a river journey became standard. *Seeing the Venerable Priest Hai-tung Returning to His Country* (fig. 125), dated 1191, for example, represents the departure of the Japanese priest Hai-tung from Ning-po.[31]

Windswept Lakeshore is a variation of the typical Southern Sung farewell scene by the river's shore. Spare in its expression, it suggests the many partings and separations known in Chinese life: exile, self-imposed reclusion, and death. The expression of human grief is enhanced by the echoing rhythms of the figures, the trees, and the rocks, all executed in a simple, unifying brush technique. Moving easily from line to volume to surface, Hsia's kinesthetic brushwork unites the compositional elements into a single spatial continuum, transforming human gesture into an expression of the natural world and the rocks and windblown trees into a projection of human emotion.

Returning Home in a Driving Rain (pl. 55), a similar composition formerly attributed to Hsia Kuei, depicts two farmers struggling to return home in a summer downpour. Although the drawing of the angry cliff face and dancing tree leaves is extremely skillful, the effect is somewhat theatrical. The round brushwork, while deriving from Hsia Kuei, is from a different hand, probably that of a close follower.

Throughout the first half of the thirteenth century, the stylistic influences of Li T'ang and Hsia Kuei dominated Southern Sung Academy landscape painting. The fan painting *Boats Moored in Wind and Rain* (pl. 56), by an unidentified thirteenth-century Academy painter, while echoing the work of Hsia Kuei, also reflects the influence of Li T'ang. Two men in a lakeside



pavilion hidden behind a thick grove of trees are seen looking out at the water, where a fishing boat returns from the day's work; across the lake, three boats are moored near a quiet landing. The composition derives from Li T'ang's *Autumn* (fig. 87), in which foreground elements that extend diagonally across the picture plane divide it into a typical one-corner composition. Li T'ang's foreground trees have been transformed into a virtuoso performance of great pines, with powerful intertwining trunks and branches and ball-shaped clusters of pine needles and swinging vines, all executed in a strong round brushwork. The rocks and overhanging cliff, done in bold ax-cut strokes, are sharply silhouetted against the picture plane; in the distance are the outlines of simpler forms in a softer ink tone.

Pl. 54. Attributed to Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230). *Windswept Lakeshore.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 10¼ x 10⅝ in. (26 x 27 cm). Purchase, Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.11)

Hsia Kuei's simplified one-corner composition (pl. 54) is reflected in the anonymous early thirteenth-century winter landscape *Waiting for the Ferry in Snow* (pl. 57), which develops the Fan K'uan idiom of small, stippled ax-cut rock pattern and bare, stubbly wintry branches (fig. 30). The scene focuses on the silent lake, where two men at the edge of a shore await the arrival of a small ferryboat, while in the distance, across the lake, crows fly over a snow-capped mountain. While the wide expanse of space perfectly enhances the stillness of the snowscape, the vigorous brushwork of angular boulders and spiky branches gives strength and power to the simple composition.

Liang K'ai (active first half of 13th century), whose family migrated from the north, began his career probably as a professional painter of religious subjects in a provincial painting studio. Appointed to the Painting Academy between 1201 and 1204, he soon left to live and paint in a Ch'an monastery in Hangchow. Calling himself Liang the Crazy, he drank heavily and, while inebriated, painted "in a sketchy manner, known as reduced brushwork"[33]—a radically simplified ink painting style characteristic of the works of Ch'an Buddhist monks of the time.

In *Sakyamuni Leaving His Mountain Retreat* (fig. 126), a work datable to about 1204 and signed "Liang K'ai of His Majesty's Painting Academy,"



Fig. 124. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g). Chapter 18, "Mourning the Parent"



Fig. 125. Unidentified artist (12th century). *Seeing the Venerable Priest Hai-tung Returning to His Country*, dated 1191. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 25 x 14¼ in. (63.6 x 36.3 cm). Tokiwayama Bunko, Kamakura



Pl. 55. After Hsia Kuei (active ca. 1195–1230). *Returning Home in a Driving Rain,* early 13th century. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, $10\frac{1}{16}$ x $10\frac{3}{8}$ in. (25.6 x 26.2 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.7.3)



Pl. 56. Unidentified artist (13th century). *Boats Moored in Wind and Rain.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9¾ x 10¼ in. (24.8 x 26.1 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.26)



Liang paints with color and follows the traditional narrative iconography practiced by the artisan painters of the commercial painting studios. The painting recalls *Lohans Leaving Their Mountain Retreat* (fig. 127), dated 1178, by the professional artist Chou Chi-ch'ang. The central figures in both paintings, done in an Indian–Central Asian drapery style (a wavy double line known as the scudding-cloud-and-running-water pattern), reflect a common iconographic model.

Later, in *Li Po Chanting a Poem* (fig. 128), done after he left the Academy, Liang K'ai again works with an inspirational reduced brushwork commonly associated with Ch'an Buddhist painting. Just before the turn of the thirteenth century, a Ch'an Buddhist monk-painter named Chih-yung (1114–1193), who lived in Ling-yin-ssu, Hangchow, is said to have painted with ink

Pl. 57. Unidentified artist (early 13th century). *Waiting for the Ferry in Snow.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9 7/8 x 10 1/8 in. (25.1 x 25.7 cm). John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.100.117)

Fig. 126. Liang K'ai (active first half of 13th century). *Sakyamuni Leaving His Mountain Retreat*, ca. 1204. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 46¼ x 20½ in. (117.6 x 51.9 cm). Collection of Hinohara Setsuzo, Tokyo

Fig. 127. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Leaving Their Mountain Retreat*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, dated 1178. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

Fig. 128. Liang K'ai (active first half of 13th century). *Li Po Chanting a Poem*. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 31¾ x 12 in. (80.8 x 30.4 cm). Tokyo National Museum

so pale and with a brushwork of such transparency that his work was described as "apparition painting" (*wang-liang-hua*).[33] In *Li Po*, which was probably influenced by the style of Chih-yung, Liang, with a simplified brushwork, captures the figure immediately, the trace of the brush becoming transparent and virtually disappearing. Stylistically, the Ch'an monk's brush painting derives its inspiration from Li Kung-lin's kinesthetic plain drawing style. Such simplified figure drawings, often isolated and removed from a narrative context, now themselves became the objects of Ch'an meditation and worship.[34]

Liang K'ai's meditative Ch'an landscape painting on a fan, *Poet Strolling by a Marshy Bank* (pl. 58), turns to a different vision from that of the imperial Lin-an garden scenes, capturing the experience of awe the painter must have felt for the immense mountain cliff and its stark, raw energy. This is not the rustic invention of a court aristocrat, but the bleak mind landscape of a true mountain recluse. The painter expresses his impression of the grotto overhang and the tranquil water as fleeting memory images, much as a poet might string together images in a quatrain. The Ch'an conception of *k'ung*, of "emptiness" and the illusoriness of existence, represented by blank space, is pervasive and all-embracing, the silence and emptiness of the landscape a preparation for Sudden Enlightenment.











Pl. 58. Liang K'ai (active first half of 13th century). *Poet Strolling by a Marshy Bank.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9⅝ x 10½ in. (24.5 x 26 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.14)

The Painting Academy Under Emperor Li-tsung (r. 1224–64)

Through the middle of the thirteenth century, during the reign of Emperor Li-tsung (r. 1224–64), Southern Sung Academy realism continued to flourish under the leadership of Hsia Kuei's younger contemporaries Liu Sung-nien, Li Sung, and Ma Yüan's son Ma Lin. In landscape painting, the decorative realism of Liu Sung-nien (active ca. 1175–after 1195) was popular.[35] *Evening in the Spring Hills* (pl. 59), a fan painting by an unidentified mid-thirteenth-century Academy painter, recalls Liu's sumptuous depiction of spring from the series *Landscapes of the Four Seasons* (fig. 129). Seen below two great pine trees with ball-shaped clusters of pine needles and twisting branches executed in a smooth, polished brushwork is a bird's-eye view of a private garden in the hills outside Lin-an. On a fresh spring evening—what Chang Tzu would have considered a "fitting moment"—the branches flowering with perfect pink blossoms, the garden owner and his guest stand in a pavilion that overlooks a broad valley to view the green hills with notched silhouettes in the distance.

Pl. 59. Unidentified artist (mid-13th century). *Evening in the Spring Hills.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9¾ x 10¼ in. (24.8 x 26.1 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., in honor of Alfreda Murck, 1986 (1986.493.1)

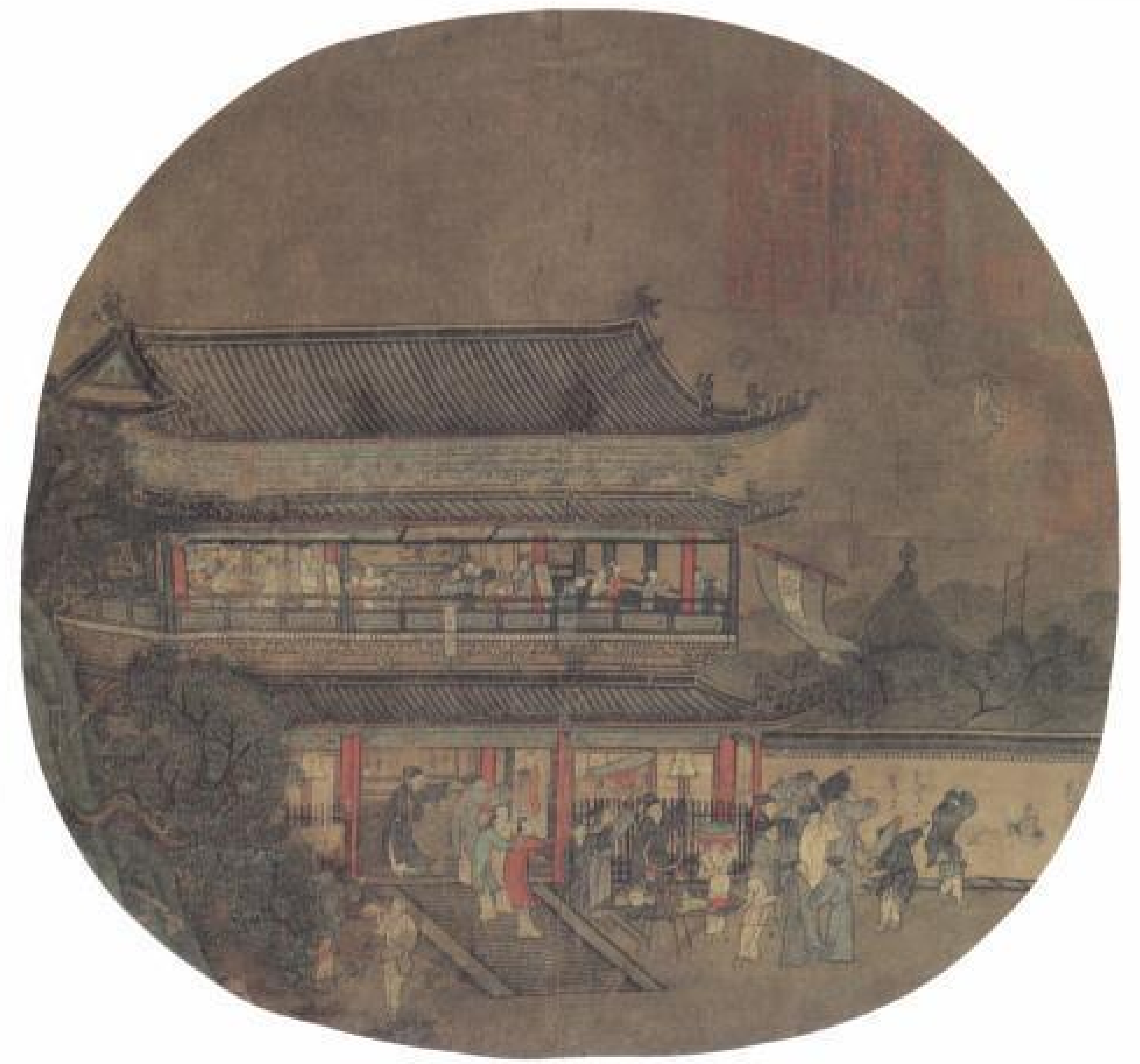




Fig. 129. Liu Sung-nien (active ca. 1175–after 1195). *Landscapes of the Four Seasons.* Detail, "Spring Scene" (see also fig. 37). Handscroll in four sections, ink and color on silk, each section 16¼ x 27⅜ in. (41.2 x 69.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing



Pl. 60. Unidentified artist (13th century). *Boating by a Willow Bank.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⁵⁄16 x 9¹³⁄16 in. (23.6 x 24.9 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.137)



Boating by a Willow Bank (pl. 60), by another unidentified thirteenth-century painter, shows two figures rowing on the water with lily pads and willows. The composition recalls the scenery of Li Chieh's *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai* (pl. 43). As the boat glides through the silvery moonlight, stillness reigns on the cool scented water.

A good example of late Southern Sung genre realism is seen in the fan painting *The Immortal Lü Tung-pin Appearing at the Yüeh-yang Pavilion* (pl. 61), by an unidentified mid-thirteenth-century artist. The painting brings to mind the bustling Northern Sung street scene depicted in the early twelfth-century *Spring Festival on the River*, by Chang Tse-tuan (fig. 90). The scenic Yüeh-yang pavilion overlooking Lake Tung-t'ing, in Hunan Province, was a favorite tourist site during the Southern Sung. It was also a place, according to popular legend, that Taoist immortals and Buddhist saints, often disguised as eccentric priests, liked to frequent. In the painting a clamorous crowd of diners, waiters, and vendors at the pavilion rush onto the balcony and into the courtyard, craning their necks for a better look at the wine-loving Taoist

Pl. 61. Unidentified artist (mid-13th century). *The Immortal Lü Tung-pin Appearing at the Yüeh-yang Pavilion.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9⅜ x 9⅞ in. (23.8 x 25.1 cm). Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.170.2)



Pl. 62. Attributed to Ch'en Chü-chung (active ca. 1201–30). *Nomad Horsemen Hunting.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9½ x 10¾ in. (24.1 x 27.3 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.32)



Fig. 130. Unidentified artist (15th century?). *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: The Story of Lady Wen-chi.* Detail from Section 9, "Writing Home." Handscroll, ink, color, and gold on silk, 11⅛ x 477 in. (28.3 x 1207.5 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.3)



Pl. 63. Attributed to Li Sung (active ca. 1190–1230). *Knick-knack Peddler*, ca. 1230. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 10$\frac{3}{8}$ x 10$\frac{1}{2}$ in. (26.1 x 26.7 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.10)

immortal Lü Tung-pin, who, having drunk his fill, flies away in the dusk. Depicted on the wall of the courtyard, in an abbreviated ink drawing style, is the tipsy figure of the popular immortal riding on a mule; the figure recalls similar portraits of Ch'an Buddhist eccentrics of the time (see pl. 76).

Attention to descriptive realism is also seen in *Nomad Horsemen Hunting* (pl. 62), an unsigned work by Ch'en Chü-chung (active ca. 1201–30), an Academy painter who specialized in painting Khitan horsemen and landscapes of the northern steppes. The desert scene, with stocky Mongolian ponies striding across rolling sand dunes, compares closely with details in *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute* (fig. 130). Despite the political hostility that existed between the Southern Sung and the Khitan and Jurchen peoples, there was during this time great popular interest in the north, and the Southern Sung painter here shows a respect for and curiosity about nomadic life, which was shared as well by poets and writers.



Fig. 131. Li Sung (active ca. 1190–1230). *Knickknack Peddler*, dated 1211. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10 x 27¾ in. (25.5 x 70.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Li Sung (active ca. 1190–1230), another great realist in figure painting, began life as a craftsman specializing in wood carving and carpentry. Adopted by the Academy painter Li Ts'ung-hsün, he was admitted to the Academy, where he worked primarily in architectural and figural genres. *Knickknack Peddler* (pl. 63), a work dating to about 1230, depicts one of Li's favorite subjects. With minutely delineated detail, village life is described to suit the imperial taste. A street vendor, carrying on a shoulder pole two enormous baskets brimful with merchandise—children's toys, household utensils, carpenters' tools, and medical aids—jauntily passes before a nurse with four clinging children. A familiar sight, the ambulatory vendor calling out and selling his wares served as an indispensable link between city and village life. Here, wearing a pheasant feather and a small flag in his cap, he plays Sung China's Santa Claus to the children and supplies luxury goods to the adults. Trained magpies alight on his portable store, and a flag advertises a special wine, an import from occupied Shantung, in the north.

The fan painting compares closely with an earlier handscroll by Li, also titled *Knickknack Peddler* (fig. 131), dated 1211 and signed "Li Ts'ung-hsün's son Li Sung." The figure on the right, a nurse holding an infant, who appears in both paintings, suggests that Li used stencil patterns made from sketches based on close observation of village life. Li's virtuoso fine-line portrayals are marvels of technical skill and psychological penetration.

The colored hanging scroll *Children Playing in the Palace Garden* (pl. 64) further illustrates the highly developed realism of mid-thirteenth-century Academy art. The depiction of playful children in a sumptuous palace setting, which began with the late eighth-century T'ang painter Chou Fang (pl. 2),



Pl. 64. Unidentified artist (mid-13th–15th century?). *Children Playing in the Palace Garden.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 54⅞ x 29¹⁵⁄₁₆ in. (139.3 x 76 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1987 (1987.150)

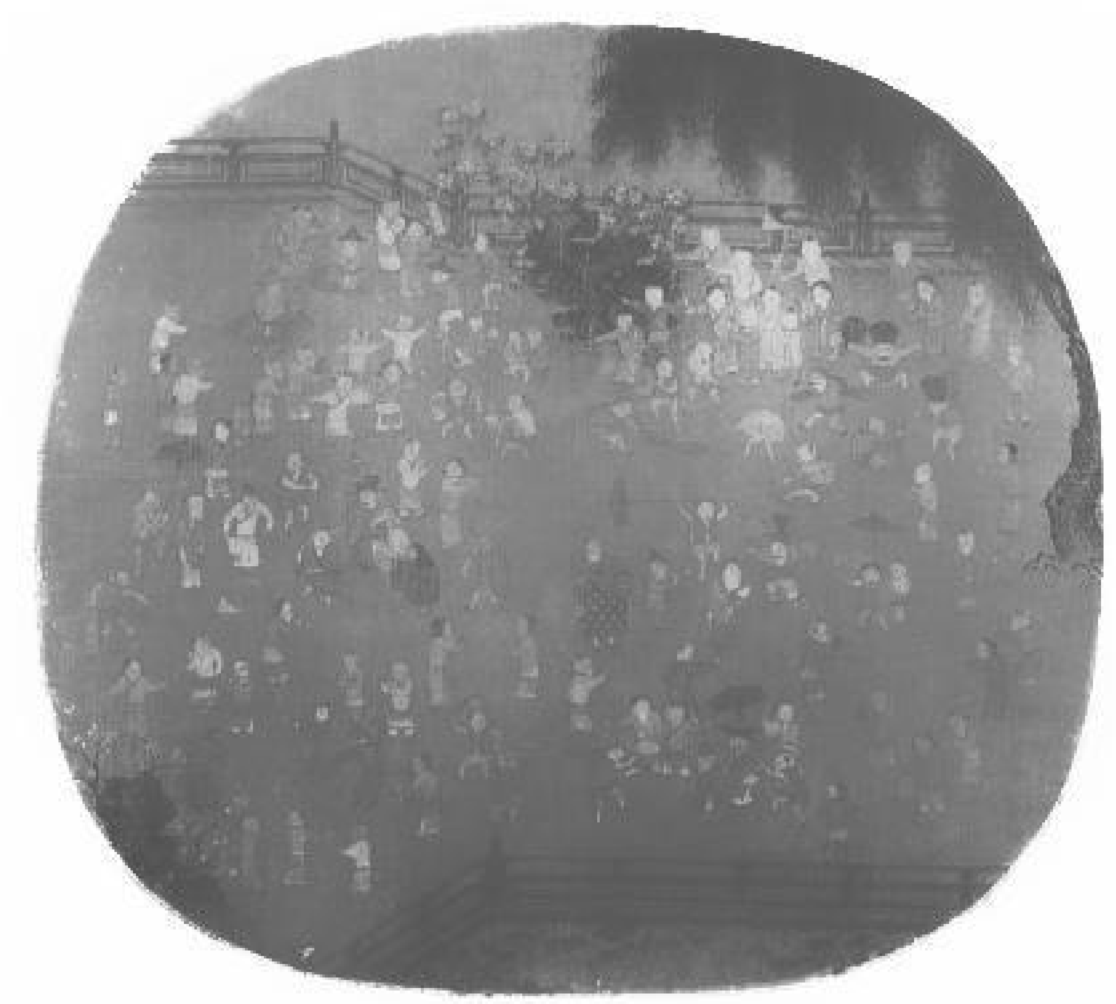


Fig. 132. Unidentified artist (13th century). *One Hundred Children at Play.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, 11 5/16 x 12 5/16 in. (28.8 x 31.3 cm). Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund. The Cleveland Museum of Art (61.261)

was made popular by the twelfth-century Southern Sung Academy painter Su Han-ch'en (active ca. 1120s–60s) and reflects the folk tradition of festival pictures and images that feature children as symbols of blessing and fecundity. This style is exemplified in the thirteenth-century fan painting *One Hundred Children at Play* (fig. 132).

Children Playing in the Palace Garden shows four princely children struggling with their lessons in a pavilion in a terraced garden,[16] while outside the pavilion more than a dozen gaily turned-out children are noisily at play, racing up and down slides, riding hobbyhorses, catching crickets, and playing games; at the right, one child tries to catch something in a tree. The children are dressed in richly exotic clothing, with one wearing a nomad-style helmet. One of the children who watch a cricket fight wears on his back a square badge of rank, which, costume historians believe, did not appear until the early Ming dynasty, toward the end of the fourteenth century.[17] This would, if confirmed, suggest that the painting is an early Ming copy rather than an original mid-thirteenth-century work. Nonetheless, the naturalism of the drawing, as well as the spatial setting, which is achieved by the use of a simple system of parallelograms that recede back in space from the picture plane, reflects unmistakably a late Southern Sung composition. Indeed, the study pavilion in the painting could be a depiction of the Writer's Pavilion in the Lin-an palace library compound.[18]

Southern Sung Academy realism reached its zenith with Ma Yüan's son Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). As a fifth-generation member of the Ma family,

Ma Lin, like his father, was a favorite with imperial patrons, first Emperor Ning-tsung and Empress Yang Mei-tzu, then Emperor Li-tsung. After succeeding to the throne in 1225, Li-tsung in 1230 commissioned Ma Lin to execute *Portraits of Sages and Worthies*, a set of thirteen paintings, five of which are now at the National Palace Museum, Taipei.[39] The portraits represent ancient China's greatest sage-kings and worthies: the legendary culture hero Fu-hsi; the three kings Yao, Shun, and Yü; the first Shang king, T'ang; the Chou kings Wen and Wu; the Duke of Chou; and Confucius and four of his followers. The eulogies that appear above each of the portraits were written and inscribed by Li-tsung himself. The first of the series, a portrait of Fu-hsi (fig. 133), which shows the legendary sage dressed in animal skins and with his traditional attributes, the hexagram and the tortoise, is modeled after the Buddhist image of a seated lohan. The entire set of portraits was enshrined in the imperial temple as evidence of the orthodox lineage of the Confucian state, of which the Southern Sung saw itself as the legitimate heir. Though technically flawless, the portraits, done on a scale too large for Ma Lin's customary intimate brush style, show a certain stiffness typical of official imperial portraits.

By contrast, in the album-size painting *The Evening Sun* (fig. 134), Ma Lin is in total control of both his subject and his medium. A five-word couplet written by Emperor Li-tsung and dated 1254 (originally presented as a facing album leaf, but now mounted on top of the painting so that together they resemble a small hanging scroll) reads:

> The mountains hold the autumn colors nearby,
> Where the swallows traverse the late evening sun.

Ma Lin has turned Hsia Kuei's quintessential Southern Sung landscape idiom of dynamic empty space (pl. 54) into a symbolic visual statement. The four tiny swallows scattered in the light of the setting sun—faint streaks of pink brush in the gray ink wash—make an indelible image of the last days of the Southern Sung.

Two signed late album-size works by Ma Lin point to new directions in painting. *Landscape with Great Pine* (pl. 65), datable to the late 1250s, though continuing in Ma Yüan's family idiom, has a dark and foreboding quality, suggestive of impending doom. (It may be relevant that the Mongols commenced their final march on the Southern Sung in 1257.) Compared with the more natural structure of Ma Yüan's trees (pl. 51), Ma Lin's twisting, highly embellished pine shows a baroque expressionism. In contrast to the freedom of movement in the elder Ma's painting, Ma Lin's forms are curiously heavy and static. The single figure, shown solemnly facing the great tree with his hands cupped in worship, adds to the mystic aura of the image. The transformation from the monumentalism of the Northern Sung to the symbolic imagery of single trees and rocks is now complete.

The delicate outline technique of Ma Lin's *Orchids* (pl. 66) derives from Hui-tsung's academic style (pl. 22). The flowers are outlined in ink, colored in a soft malachite green and pale pink, and touched with whitish highlights; the

leaves are outlined in dark green and colored in a deep malachite blue-green. The carefully planned composition, with gracefully twisting flower petals and leaves, is informed by an abstract, calligraphic sensibility, a subtle balancing of parallel rhythms and counter-rhythms. Because the accompanying poem is lost, the symbolic meaning of the image is not known. We may, however, recall Emperor Li-tsung's *Quatrain on Late Spring* (pl. 41), quoted earlier:

> How spring makes me sad!
> Timidly I bear the passing of spring.
> The young lady has no feeling for me,
> She treats my love merely as that of a waning spring.

But the symbolism of *Orchids* may include allusions to the political climate as well as to the waning of passion.[40] Because the orchid grows wild in inaccessible mountainous areas, it symbolizes the reclusion of the scholar-painters and poets, a trend that became significant in the last years of the Southern Sung, particularly after the Mongol conquest.

Ma Lin's art brings to an end the realistic representation of the Sung Painting Academy, and in it is exemplified both the achievements and the limitations of Sung academic art. Though he served the imperial taste and worked within the tradition of the Ma family, Ma Lin also developed his own idiom. In painting lone trees, rocks, and flowering plants, he created a personal





Fig. 133. Ma Lin (ca. 1180 – after 1256). *Portrait of Fu-hsi.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 98⅜ x 44⅛ in. (249.8 x 112 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Fig. 134. Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). *The Evening Sun*, dated 1254. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 20¼ x 10½ in. (51.3 x 26.6 cm). Nezu Bijitsukan, Tokyo



Pl. 65. Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). *Landscape with Great Pine*, ca. 1250s. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 9 15/16 x 10 1/4 in. (25.1 x 26 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.63)



Pl. 66. Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). *Orchids.* Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 10 5/16 x 8 13/16 in. (26.2 x 22.4 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.10)

symbolism both about nature and about his own search for renewal. His flower paintings, repeated as serial compositions, exemplify the new symbolic imagery of single elements of nature.

But the symbolic image, laden with meaning, could be explicated only with the help of words. Ma Lin's paintings were often accompanied by poems. Yet these were written by his patrons and were not meant to express the artist's own perceptions. A silent partner in a collaborative effort, the professional painter was thus bound to a wordless vision. It remained for a different kind of painter to discover a new mode of self-expression, one that combined both word and image.

Word and Image: The Art of the Scholar-Amateur

During the Northern Sung, scholars after passing civil examinations usually became government officials. By the Southern Sung, however, the civil examination system regularly produced hundreds more *chin-shih* degree candidates than the bureaucracy could absorb. Besides teaching, an unemployed scholar had few options. He could either become a recluse or remain a frustrated office seeker. After the Mongol conquest in the late thirteenth century, with the disruption of the examination system, the traditional career of the Confucian scholar—rising through government service—was ended. The modern scholar Yoshikawa Kōjirō has described the emergence of a new "independent (free) artist" (*wen-jen*), as opposed to the old Sung scholar-official (*shih-ta-fu*), in China after the Mongol conquest.[41] Deprived of a role in the government, unemployed scholars now turned to earning their livings as professional men of letters. What had been for the earlier Sung scholar-official the pursuit of *wen*, the ideal of civil "ornament" or culture, now became for the Yüan man of letters a way of life, through either necessity or choice, devoted primarily to poetry, calligraphy, and painting.

This in turn led to the development of an increasing interaction among poetry, calligraphy, and painting, the so-called three perfections (*san-chüeh*). By the late thirteenth century, scholar-amateur artists, who were trained more as poets and calligraphers than as painters, were attempting to master all three modes of expression and to use them as equal components in a single work. They began by talking and writing about a visual poetics that equated painting both with poetry and with calligraphy.

During the late Southern Sung, a decline in moral values gave rise to several popular themes in painting, one of which was the three friends of the wintry season: the early-blossoming plum, harbinger of spring; the bamboo, which bends but does not break; and the pine, green throughout the harsh winter—all symbolic of moral steadfastness and friendship in adversity. *Poems on Painting Plum Blossoms and Bamboo* (pl. 67), dated 1260, an important calligraphic handscroll by the late Southern Sung scholar-amateur Chao Meng-chien (1199–before 1267), exemplifies mastery of the three perfections. In these poems that Chao composed for friends, among them a bamboo painter named Wang Ts'ui-

yen, as "a painter's manual" on how to paint plum trees and bamboo, he emphasizes the importance of creative freedom and the revival of early traditions in both painting and poetry:

> Ancient painters depicted objects without copying fixed forms;
> By shaping forms after nature, they achieved true correspondence.
> Today, those who pursue tradition are bound to their mentors;
> Like stamping in clay, they only follow in their footsteps.
> How can we build a house within a house?
> Only by creating something new will I be satisfied.
> Many hundreds of years have passed since the time of Tsin and Wei;
> Who shall renew the traditions of Wang Hsi-chih and Wang Hsien-chih?
> And the lofty lyrics of Li Po and Tu Fu?[42]

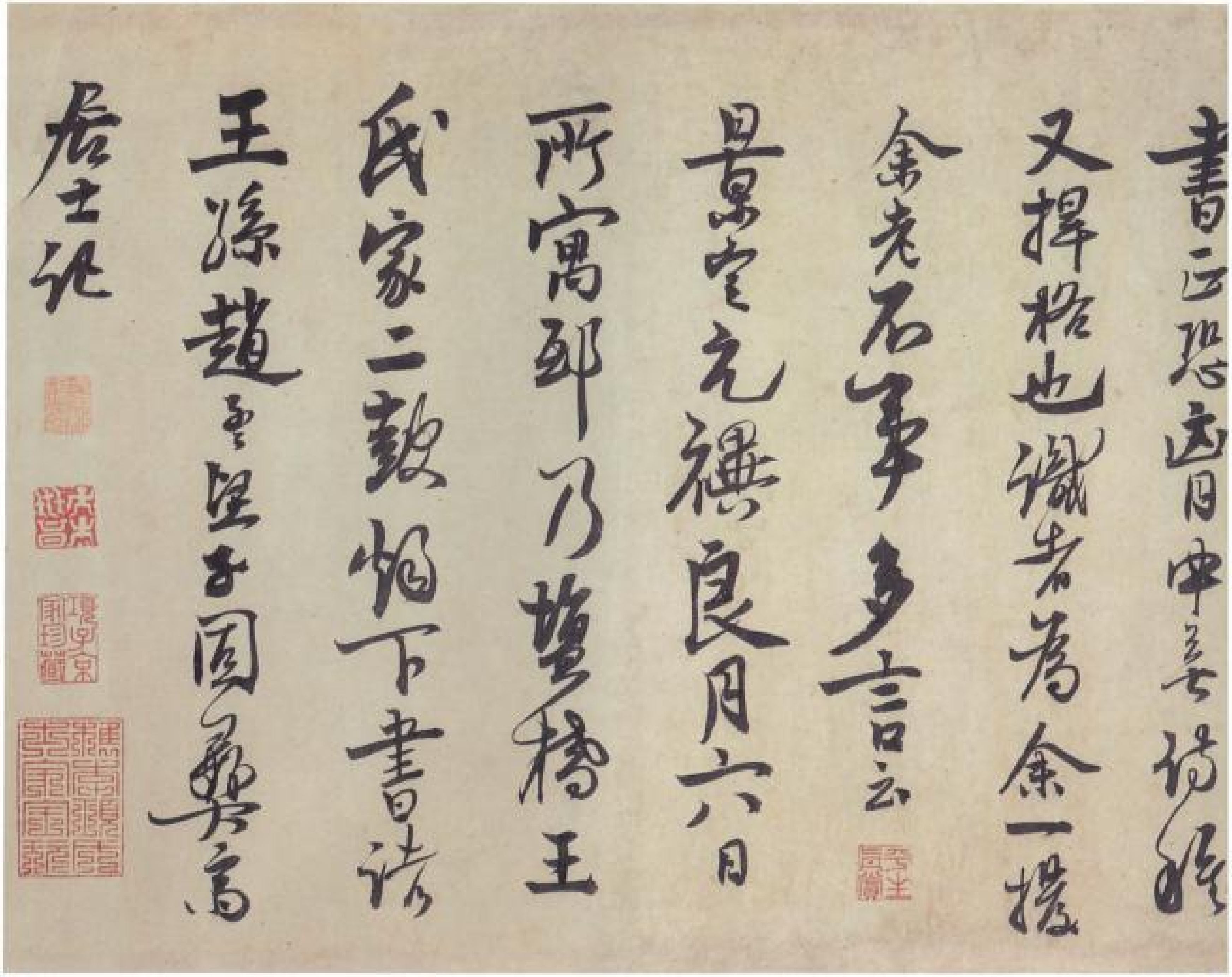
In a colophon at the end, Chao adds:

> Several months after receiving this poem from me, [Wang] Ts'ui-yen suddenly asked: "What I requested was a poem about painting bamboo. Why did you write to me about the poetry of Li Po and Tu Fu?" I answered, laughing, "Have you not heard the words [of Su Shih], 'Anyone who composes poetry by insisting on one fixed form of poetry is not a true poet'?"[43]

These words by the famous late Northern Sung scholar-amateur follow his better-known injunction, "Anyone who judges painting by form-likeness shows merely the insight of a child."[44] By citing Su Shih's celebrated words, which equally condemn "fixed form" in poetry and "form-likeness" in painting, Chao Meng-chien goes beyond his thesis that the depictions of objects should follow not "fixed forms" but nature, and raises the possibility of reaching for "unlikeness" in painting.

Chao Meng-chien was a member of a distant branch of the Sung imperial family. Born and raised in Hai-yen, Chekiang Province, in relatively impoverished circumstances, he later came to be known as one of the most cultivated scholar-amateurs of his time. Because he left behind a considerable body of writing, his life is better documented than that of most Academy painters.[45] After earning his *chin-shih* degree in 1226, he served, without much distinction, as a prefectural official, but was better known as a passionate art collector, in which capacity he was compared with Mi Fu, of the late Northern Sung. He is said in his later years to have retired to a life of meditation and the practice of calligraphy and flower painting. In his calligraphy, he follows the square-character format of the Southern Sung imperial tradition (see the writing of Emperor Li-tsung, pl. 37), expressing a free yet tranquil spirit with a relaxed but angular brushstroke.

In the long handscroll *Narcissus* (pl. 68), which shows more than twelve feet of Chao's favorite flower, the viewer is treated to an insect's view of a sea of narcissus plants, executed in a monochromatic plain drawing technique, that gently twist and wave in the breeze. The pale, silvery ink tone creates a soft moonlight effect. The stemmed buds and blossoms and long, entwined

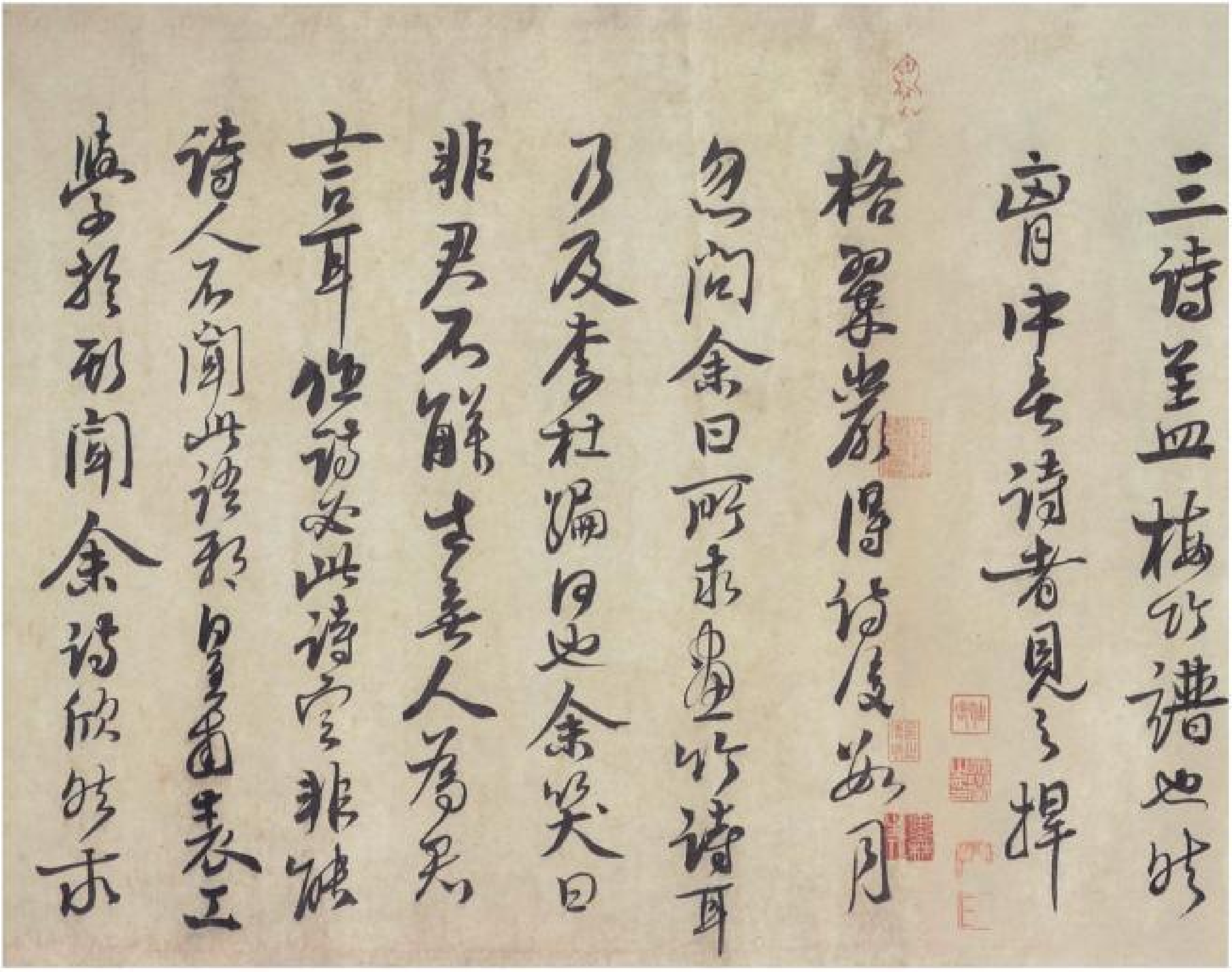


leaves are first drawn in outline, then subtly shaded with ink; a darker shade of ink is applied along the outline, then made to fade toward the center, giving a three-dimensional appearance to the form. The blossoms are described at every stage of growth (pl. 68a).

Pl. 67. Chao Meng-chien (1199–before 1267). *Poems on Painting Plum Blossoms and Bamboo*, dated 1260. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13⅜ x 128⅞ in. (33.5 x 327 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.28)

Painting style during the Southern Sung may be characterized as following two contrasting modes, the "elegant" and the "rustic."[46] The former may be associated with Ma Lin's academic painting in color and the latter with Chao Meng-chien's scholar-amateur painting in monochrome. The academic style remained entrenched in realism, while the style of the scholar-amateur developed into the representation of a state of mind. Unlike Ma Lin's orchids (pl. 66), which offer a realistic rendition of the flower, Chao Meng-chien's formalized narcissus, despite botanical accuracy, turns from the flower itself to the mind of the painter.

Known as the water goddess, the narcissus was associated with the two



goddesses of the Hsiang River, and this association in turn linked it with Ch'ü Yüan (343–278 B.C.), the loyal minister of the ancient kingdom of Ch'u, who, dejected by the devastation of his country and his banishment from court, drowned himself in the Mi-lo River (a tributary of the Hsiang). In his later years, Chao Meng-chien, distressed by the rapidly declining fortunes of the Southern Sung, is said to have identified with Ch'ü Yüan: sailing in a houseboat (in the manner of Mi Fu), he would take off his cap, pour wine on his hair, and while squatting on the floor sing "On Encountering Sorrow," the famous poem by Ch'ü.[47]

After the Mongol conquest in 1279, a calamity that Chao himself fortunately did not live to witness, his admirers regarded his *Narcissus* as symbolizing the "fragrance of a nation fallen and drifting away."[48] In his poem inscribed on Chao's scroll, Ch'iu Yüan (1247–after 1327), a leading Sung loyalist after the conquest, writes of the painting as a symbol of a China shattered:



Pl. 68. Chao Meng-chien (1199–before 1267). *Narcissus*. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13 1/16 x 146 1/2 in. (33.2 x 372.2 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.4)

The ice is thin, the sandbanks are dark, and the short grasses are dying;
[The goddess] who picks fragrant flowers is far away, on the other side
of Lake Hsiang.
Who has left the immortal's jade pendants in the moonlit night?
They surpass even the "nine fields of orchids in the autumn breeze."[49]

The shiny bronze vessel is overturned, and the immortal's dew spilled;
The bright jade ring is smashed, like broken corals.
How I pity the narcissus for not being the orchid,
Which at least knew the sober minister from Ch'u [Ch'ü Yüan].

Less fortunate than Chao Meng-chien was Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307), who survived the conquest to face a totally changed world. A native of Wu-hsing, Chekiang Province, he achieved his *chin-shih* degree candidacy in the Ching-ting era (1260–64) and quickly won a place for himself in the literary circles in Wu-hsing, as well as in the Southern Sung capital, Lin-an. Ch'ien was just over forty in 1276, when the capital fell to the Mongols. By 1279, all of China was for the first time totally under alien rule. Soon after the catastrophe, Ch'ien renounced his scholarly life and, in vehement disgust with the failure of traditional Confucian learning to save the country from conquest, burned all his books.[50] He was determined, however, not to cooperate with the Mongols, and he refused to register as the head of a Confucian household, which would have exempted him from certain taxes and corvée duties.[51] To support himself, he turned to selling his paintings in Wu-hsing. Trying to lose himself in his art, he would drink heavily before he painted.[52]



In an early work, *Sparrow on an Apple Branch* (fig. 135), datable to the 1270s, Ch'ien Hsüan paints in the Southern Sung Academy tradition of Lin Ch'un (active ca. 1174–89) and Li Ti (ca. 1110–after 1197).[53] In the autumn scene, a sprightly sparrow pauses briefly on an apple branch laden with ripe, succulent fruits and browning, worm-eaten leaves. A direct descendant of Hui-tsung's *Finches and Bamboo* (pl. 22), the sparrow and the apple branch inhabit the same magic garden as that which the Northern Sung emperor had envisioned. Executed on paper rather than silk, the delicate drawing with its serene, harmonious colors glows with a warm realism. There is in this work a tenuous, but false, sense that the delicate and harmonious world of the Southern Sung could have gone on forever, re-creating itself with a self-absorbed focus and energy.

A vastly changed world is seen in Ch'ien Hsüan's *Pear Blossoms* (pl. 69), datable to about 1280, after the Mongol conquest.[54] Although the painting in its composition initially resembles Ma Lin's picture of flowering plum (fig. 104), Ch'ien's poem, a seven-word quatrain at the left, makes it clear that the real subject is not the flowering pear but the artist's own sorrow at the destruction of Sung civilization:

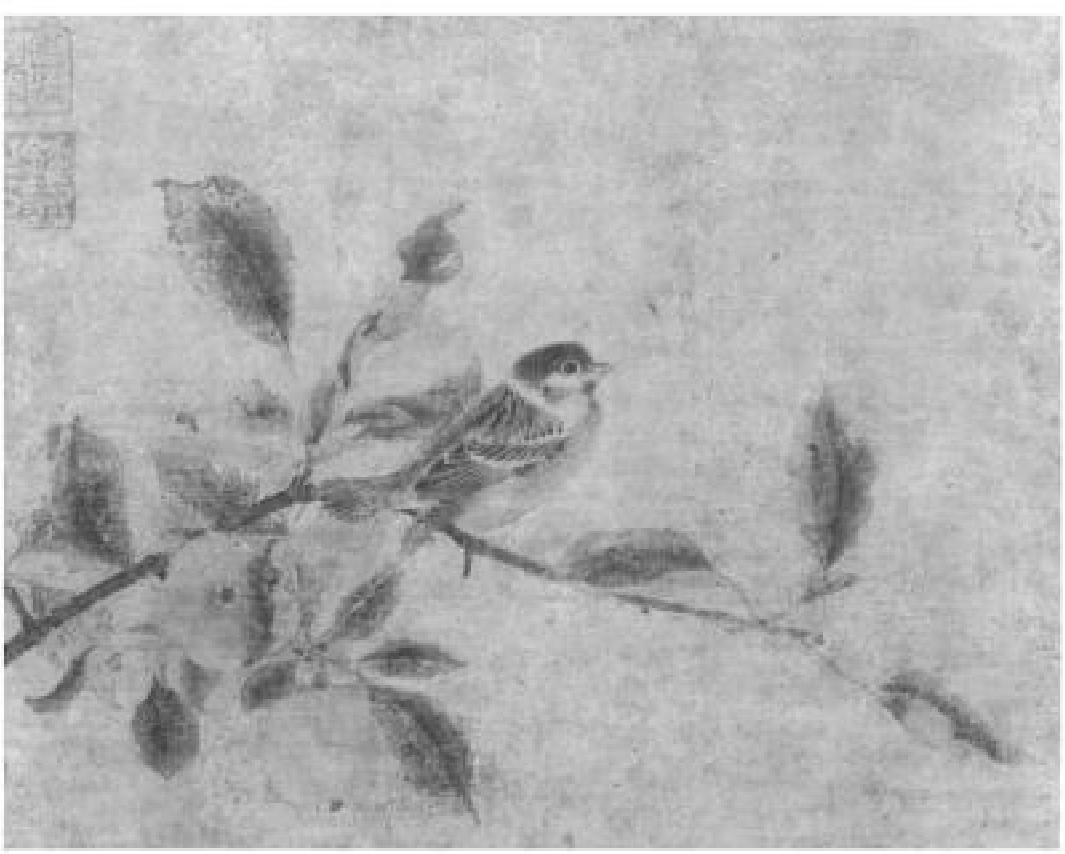
> The lonely tear-stained face, teardrops washing the branches.
> Though now without makeup, her old charms remain.
> Behind the closed gate, on a rainy night, how she is filled with sadness,
> How differently she looked bathed in golden waves of moonlight, before darkness fell.

Overleaf
Pl. 68a. Detail, pl. 68









Pl. 69. Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307). *Pear Blossoms*, ca. 1280. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 12¼ x 37½ in. (31.1 x 95.3 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1977 (1977.79)

Fig. 135. Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307). *Sparrow on an Apple Branch*, ca. 1270s. Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 8⅝ x 10⅞ in. (22 x 27.5 cm). University Museum purchase, Carl Otto von Kienbusch, Jr., Memorial Collection, The Art Museum, Princeton University (1959-1)



The first two lines allude to the T'ang dynasty poet Po Chü-i's immortal "Song of Unending Sorrow," which laments the loss of the T'ang Empire:

> The lonely, jadelike face, stained with tears,
> Like a rain in spring on the blossom of the pear.[55]

In Po's ballad, the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung dreams of his murdered mistress, whose tear-stained face is compared to a rain-bathed pear blossom. Ch'ien Hsüan in his poem tries to recall how his own love once looked, "before darkness fell." While Ch'ien's painting shows no grieving woman and his poem makes no direct mention of the pear blossom, the mute image of the pale-colored flower, as a metaphor of all women, is given specificity of meaning through historical reference.[56]

Ch'ien's calligraphy (fig. 136) is modeled after the pre-Wang Hsi-chih archaic mode of Chung Yu, in particular the *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* (fig. 56). Ch'ien Hsüan's revival of the third-century Chung Yu style at the end of the Southern Sung initiated its popularity among recluse artists of the Yüan period, most notably Ni Tsan (1301–1374).

Overleaf
Pl. 69a. Detail, pl. 69







Pl. 70. Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307). *Returning Home*, ca. 1285. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 10¼ x 42 in. (26 x 106.6 cm). Gift of John C. Ferguson, 1913 (13.220.124)

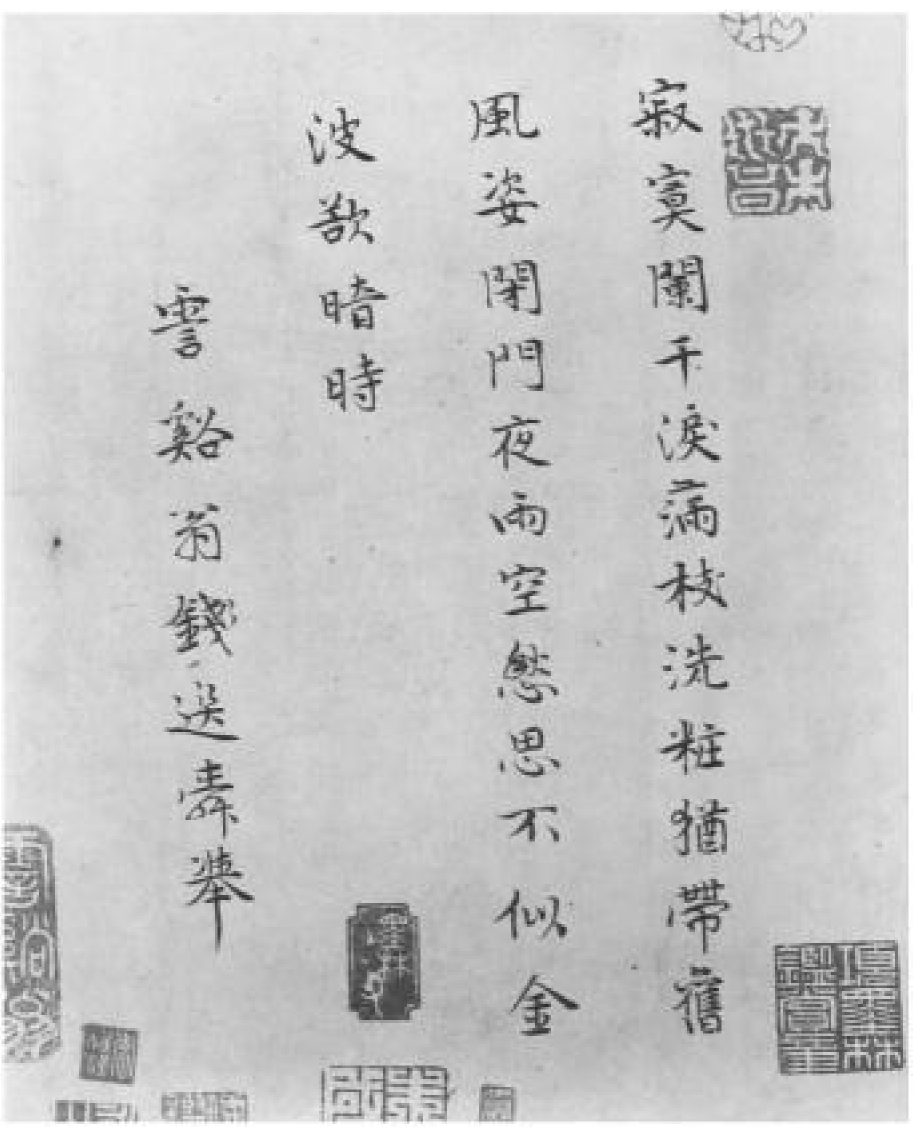


Fig. 136. Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307). The artist's inscription on *Pear Blossoms* (pl. 69)



In combining painting with poetry and calligraphy to create a single work of self-expression, Ch'ien Hsüan's art marks the end of painting as objective representation, ushering in a new era of greatly increased complexity and sophistication. If we compare Ma Lin's plum blossom and accompanying poem by Empress Yang Mei-tzu (fig. 104) with Ch'ien's *Pear Blossoms,* we can see the progression from parallel expression to integrated expression. In Ma's work, word and image neither mutually describe nor interact with each other; the poet and the painter merely express their own individual, though parallel, responses to a lovely flower. Ch'ien Hsüan, on the other hand, as both the poet and the painter, creates a work that integrates poetry and painting, and in which word, image, and calligraphy resonate and amplify one another in a perfect union of expression. Similarly, Ma Lin's realistic representation of orchids in a natural, three-dimensional space (pl. 66) may be compared with Ch'ien's rendering of pear blossom, branches, and leaves as flat patterns on the picture plane, drawn with a thin calligraphic brushline to express a mood of languid passivity and detachment. Ch'ien's flower petals are perfectly round and even (pl. 69a), yet their very perfection makes them abstract and unreal. The leaves turn and fold in a motion consonant with the slow, twisting movement of the calligraphy and, in turn, the brushstrokes and characters imitate the rhythm of the leaves and blossoms.

Ch'ien Hsüan's *Returning Home* (pl. 70), datable to about 1285, shows the recluse poet T'ao Ch'ien. In this work, Ch'ien confronts the meaning of eremitism in his own time, and onto T'ao Ch'ien he projects his own sense of alienation and loss. T'ao Ch'ien was born under the Eastern Tsin dynasty

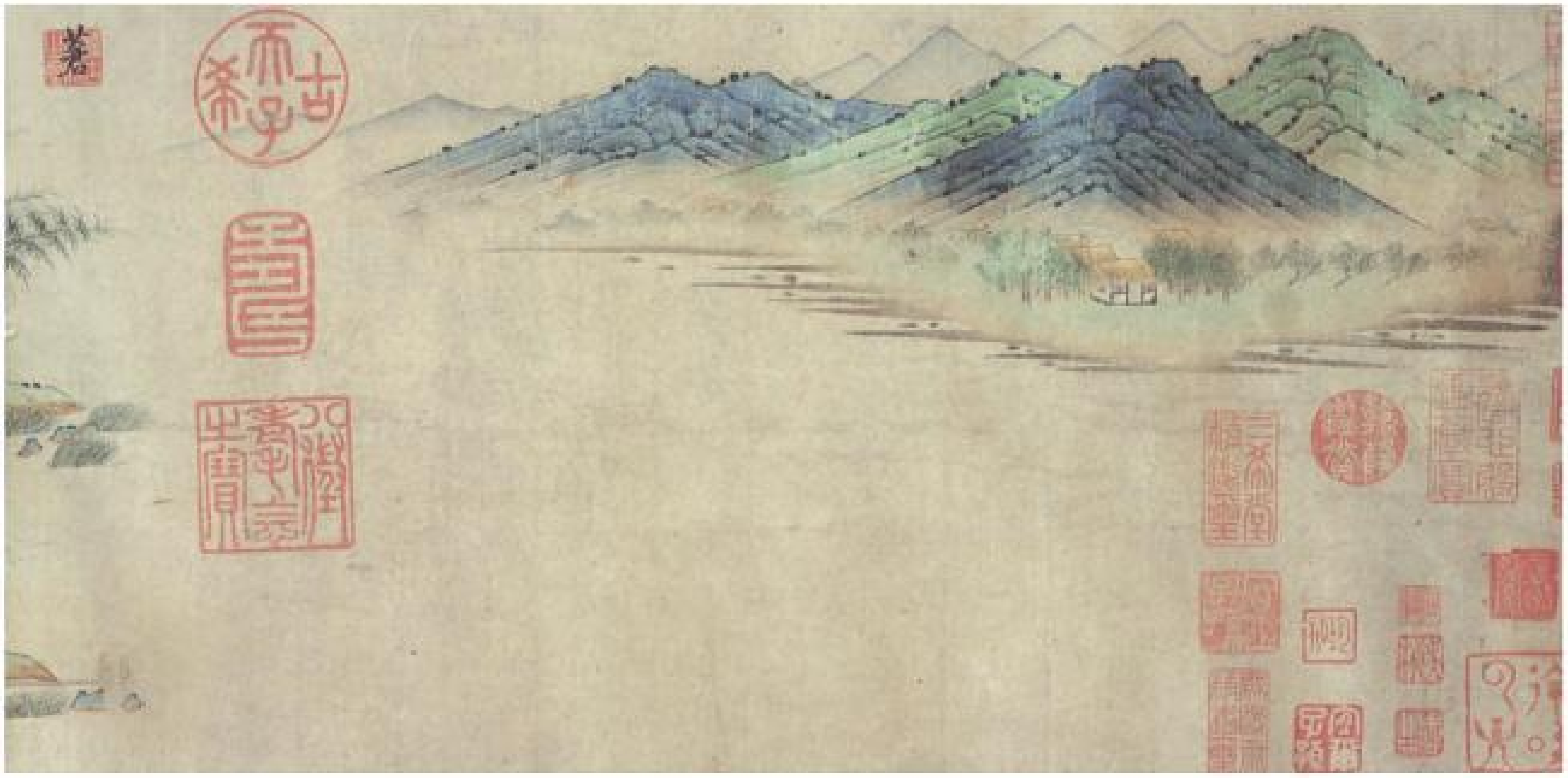


Pl. 71. Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307). *Wang Hsi-chih Watching Geese*, ca. 1295. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 9⅛ x 36½ in. (23.2 x 92.7 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.6)

(317–420). At the age of forty, he left the last of several frustrating low-level government jobs and returned home to live as a farmer. He wrote "Returning Home" in the year 405.[57] The poem was acclaimed as a masterpiece of lyrical expression. While its focus was liberation from material concerns, it also raised the moral dilemma of having to choose between serving against one's conscience and withdrawing from political engagement. On his handscroll *Returning Home*, Ch'ien Hsüan added the following lines:

> In front of his gate he plants five willows;
> By the eastern fence, he picks chrysanthemums.
> In his long chant is a lingering purity,
> But there is never enough wine to sustain him.
> To live in this world one must drink,
> For to take office brings only shame.
> In a moment of inspiration he composes "Returning Home"—
> The poem of a thousand years.[58]

The image of T'ao Ch'ien as the archetypal recluse had undergone important changes during the Sung dynasty, by which time a scholar's decision to serve the imperial house or to withdraw politically was viewed as an act of loyalty or dissent. In order to restore Confucian ethics after the turmoil of the Five Dynasties period, the Northern Sung statesman-historian Ou-yang Hsiu, in his *History of the Five Dynasties*, scathingly condemned the shamelessness of Five Dynasties officials who so casually switched their allegiance during dynas-



tic change, singling out Feng Tao (died 954), a minister who had served a succession of four ruling houses. A righteous minister, by strict Neo-Confucian standards, should not serve two masters; he must show absolute loyalty to a fallen dynasty, if not by dying a martyr's death then by withdrawing from worldly affairs. To buttress this view, Southern Sung historians, led by the great Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi (1130–1200), linked T'ao Ch'ien's permanent reclusion to his loyalty to the Eastern Tsin and his subsequent refusal to serve the new Liu-Sung dynasty in A.D. 420. T'ao is said to have signaled his refusal to acknowledge the new dynasty by never using its reign title.[59] Thus T'ao's self-imposed reclusion was used to suit the new political definition of eremitism that emerged in the thirteenth century.

After the Mongol conquest, Neo-Confucianists demanded that all loyal "leftover subjects" (*i-min*) of the Southern Sung resist serving the new rulers. In Ch'ien Hsüan's *Returning Home*, T'ao Ch'ien as the "leftover subject" exemplifies reclusion as an act of ultimate devotion to a fallen dynasty. Ch'ien Hsüan too resisted pressure to serve at court, in his case the Mongol court. As the early Ming scholar Chang Yü (1333–1385) wrote:

> Who could imagine that only Ch'ien alone would choose virtue and hardship,
> Serving as a professional painter until his hair turned white?[60]

Ch'ien derived his image of T'ao Ch'ien from Li Kung-lin's illustration of T'ao's poem (fig. 48), casting it in an archaic blue-and-green setting, the



traditional malachite green isle of the immortals. But unlike Li's narrative, which shows T'ao returning to a pastoral community representing the whole structure of China's rural life,[61] Ch'ien Hsüan's T'ao Ch'ien, in a boat suspended in space, seems to be drifting away from the shore.[62]

In *Wang Hsi-chih Watching Geese* (pl. 71), datable to about 1295, Ch'ien Hsüan illustrates the new *wen-jen*, or "man of letters," culture in the Chiang-nan region, south of the Yangtze River. At the left is Ch'ien's own poem:

> How pleasant are the elegant bamboo and trees!
> In a peaceful pavilion, relaxing with bare stomach, how wonderful
> it must feel!
> Writing the *Tao-te ching* for a Taoist friend,
> He leaves behind a romantic image—a man who loves geese.

In the painting, Wang Hsi-chih, the fourth-century "calligraphic sage," is represented as a prototypical man of letters, one with a passion for style, tradition, and spiritual freedom (pl. 71a). According to popular legend, when a certain powerful court official was looking for an ideal son-in-law, he chose Wang Hsi-chih because Wang alone among the candidates interviewed appeared nonchalant and unintimidated by his sumptuous surroundings, sitting with his robe open and his stomach shockingly bared. It will be recalled that Wang was said to have found inspiration for his calligraphy by observing the graceful movements of long-necked geese; hence the "romantic image—a man who loves geese."

In Ch'ien's painting, the scholar surveys his idealized domain from a pavilion. The scholar's retreat was first represented in painting by the eighth-century recluse Lu Hung, in his *Ten Views from a Thatched Lodge* (fig. 28). Here, under Mongol rule, the early Yüan scholar's private dwelling is viewed as a privileged haven, where values central to traditional Chinese culture could be salvaged and preserved.

Compared with Ma Yüan's *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall* (pl. 51), Ch'ien Hsüan's archaizing blue-and-green painting—made by an artist who has renounced the present in order to live in the past—has an unreal, storybook quality. Turning resolutely away from Southern Sung realism, Ch'ien treats the composition as a page from an illuminated manuscript, with a painted border on the left that clearly separates it from the space used for the accompanying text. The mountains and trees, painted in linear patterns in flat mineral colors, are archaizing and schematic.

With the demise of the Southern Sung Painting Academy, Ch'ien Hsüan's patrons were no longer princely aesthetes and court aristocrats, but affluent merchants, urban dwellers, and displaced scholar-officials like himself. Although Ch'ien's popular success as a painter rested partly on his erudition and his reputation as a scholar-amateur, he was also a superb craftsman, capable of the most refined techniques in painting. In an early Ming work on antiquities, *Essential Criteria for the Judgment of Antiquities* (preface dated 1387), by Ts'ao Chao, is found a spirited discussion attributed to Ch'ien Hsüan and

Pl. 71a. Detail, pl. 71

his younger contemporary Chao Meng-fu of what constitutes scholar-amateur (*li-chia*) painting:

> Chao Meng-fu asked Ch'ien Hsüan, "What then is scholar-amateur painting?" Ch'ien replied, "It is the painting of the amateurs." Chao said, "Correct! But look at the paintings of Wang Wei, Li Ch'eng, Hsü Hsi, and Li Kung-lin. They are all lofty and admirable works by scholar-amateurs, and each of them accurately transmits the spirit of the depicted object by capturing its special qualities. As for people of recent times who practice scholar-amateur painting, how very misguided they are!"[85]

This exchange suggests a reassessment of the so-called scholar-amateur tradition in painting during the early Yüan period. It remained for Chao Meng-fu to lead the Yüan revolution in painting, formulating and redefining a new discipline for the scholar-amateur painter.

1. For a close analysis of the politics and intellectual climate of the early Southern Sung, see James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century*, Harvard East Asian Monographs, 132 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).
2. See the essay by Wing-tsit Chan on Chu Hsi, in Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, 16 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 282–90.
3. According to Charles Hucker, the Southern Sung capital "had a resident population of two million within the city walls, surrounded by another two million suburbanites"; see Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 331–33.
4. For descriptions of life in thirteenth-century Lin-an, see Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250–1276*, translated by H. M. Wright (New York: Macmillan; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), pp. 48–55. For Marco Polo's descriptions of Lin-an, see *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Ronald Latham (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1958), pp. 184–201.
5. See Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition: Chiang K'uei and Southern Sung Tz'u Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 26–33.
6. Ibid., p. 33.
7. See Max Loehr, entry no. 8, in *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in the Collection of John M. Crawford, Jr.*, exhib. cat. (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1962), pp. 61–65. I have drawn on the research of You-heng Feng, a graduate student at Princeton University, who is preparing a Ph.D. dissertation, "*Fishing Village at Hsi-sai Mountain*, by Li Chieh (ca. 1124–after 1191): A Study of Scholar-Officials' Art in the Southern Sung Period."

   At the July 1991 International Symposium of Chinese Art, held at the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Professor Jao Tsung-i presented a paper entitled "A Study of Li Chieh's 'Fishing Village by Cha Stream' and Issues Related to Its Colophons." See National Palace Museum, Taipei, *Abstracts of the International Colloquium on Chinese Art History, 1991* (Taipei, 1991), pp. 178–79.
8. See Mi Fu, *Hua-shih* (History of Painting), in Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1973), vol. 2, p. 653.
9. Li Ch'eng-sou, *Hua shan-shui chüeh* (Secrets of Landscape Painting; preface dated 1221), in *Mei-shu ts'ung-shu* (Compilation of Books on Fine Arts) (Shanghai: Shen-chou Kuo-kuang-she, 1928), part 3, section 9, p. 12.
10. Ibid., p. 54.
11. See Chapter 3, p. 133, above. Translated as "The Return" in James R. Hightower, trans., *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 268–70. See also Kang-i Sun Chang, *Six Dynasties Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 21–22.
12. Han Cho, *Shan-shui Ch'un-ch'üan chi* (Collection of Ch'un-ch'üan's Essays on Landscape Painting; preface dated 1121), in Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 2, p. 662; see also Robert Maeda, *Two Twelfth Century Texts on Chinese Painting*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, 8 (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1970), p. 16.
13. Roderick Whitfield has brought to my attention that the animals depicted in this painting are gibbons rather than macaques. For a discussion of a similar fan composition in the Beijing Palace Museum, see Robert H.

van Gulik, *The Gibbon in China: An Essay in Chinese Animal Lore* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 81.

14. The lineage of the Ma family painters is given in Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien* (Precious Mirror of Painting; preface dated 1365), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 2, *chüan* 4, pp. 101, 104.
15. James Cahill, in *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings: T'ang, Sung, and Yüan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p. 148, dates this painting, signed by Ma Kung-hsien, to the late thirteenth century. To support his dating, Cahill notes that, contrary to the evidence presented by Hsia Wen-yen (see note 14 above), Chuang Su's *Hua-chi pu-i* (Addendum to "A Continuation of the History of Painting"; preface dated 1298) mentions Ma Kung-hsien as Ma Yüan's grandson, which would make Kung-hsien a son or nephew of Ma Lin. Since I have no problem in accepting Ma Kung-hsien's painting as a work of the late twelfth century, I see no reason to doubt Hsia Wen-yen's citation of Kung-hsien as Ma Yüan's uncle. A native of Hua-t'ing (outside modern Shanghai), Chuang was a distinguished bibliographer, though he was not, perhaps, well informed as an art historian. The name Kung-hsien, which parallels Shih-jung (Ma Yüan's father), should properly belong to Ma Yüan's father's generation; from Ma Yüan's generation onward, a single-word name (Ma K'uei or Ma Lin) seemed to be the pattern.
16. For earlier examples of this subject, see *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection During the Hsüan-ho Era; preface dated 1120), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 1, pp. 18, 19; *chüan* 6, p. 66; *chüan* 8, p. 83.
17. For the *Five Hundred Lohans*, by Chou Ch'i-ch'ang and Lin T'ing-kuei, see Wen C. Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji," 2 vols. (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1956); and Wen C. Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, vol. 3, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1958).
18. See Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 311–12.
19. See Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans," vol. 1, pp. 108, 116. The text of Te-hung's encomiums is collected in Tesuji, *Rakan-zusan-shū* (Collection of Encomiums for the Lohan Pictures) (Tokyo: Enzan-bunko, 1862), vol. 2, fols. 18–21r.
20. See Maggie Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1985).
21. See Hans H. Frankel, "The Plum Tree in Chinese Poetry," *Asiatische Studien* 6 (1952), pp. 88–115; and Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade*, pp. 32–39.
22. Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade*, p. 185.
23. Quoted from "Things That Gratify the Heart and Pleasurable Events," written by Chang Tzu at the end of 1201; see Chou Mi, *Wu-lin chiu-shih* (Old Tales of Hangchow; ca. 1280), in *Tung-ching meng-hua lu (wai ssu-chung)* (Shanghai: Ku-tien Wen-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she, 1956), pp. 512–13. For an English translation of this essay and a fine discussion of Chang Tzu, see Lin, *Transformation of Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, pp. 26–34.
24. See Chapter 3, p. 133, above.
25. Translation, with slight modification, after Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C. C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 85.
26. See Alfreda Murck, "Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers by Wang Hung," in Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984), pp. 214–35.

    For a discussion of the transmission to Muromachi Japan of compositions of the Eight Views derived from Hsia Kuei, see Richard Stanley-Baker, "Some Proposals Concerning the Transmission to Muromachi Japan of Styles Associated with Painters from Chekiang of the Late Yüan and Early Ming: With Particular Reference to the Sources of Styles Favored in the Hung-chih Academy," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen* (Essays on Chinese Painting in Honor of Professor Suzuki Kei's Sixtieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 70–96.
27. See Suzuki Kei, "Gyokukan Jakufun shiron" (A Study of Yü-chien Jo-fên; English summary), *Bijutsu kenkyū*, no. 236 (September 1964), pp. 1–14.
28. For an interpretation of this evocative scene, see Richard M. Barnhart, "Li Kung-lin's *Hsiao Ching t'u*, Illustrations of the *Classic of Filial Piety*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1967), pp. 52–53.
29. Barnhart, *Border of Heaven*, p. 87.
30. See Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Poetry and Prose of the T'ang and Sung* (Beijing: Panda Books, 1984), p. 16.
31. See Miyeko Murase, "Farewell Paintings of China: Chinese Gifts to Japanese Visitors," *Artibus Asiae* 32 (1970), pp. 214–20.
32. Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 4, p. 104.
33. See Shimada Shūjirō, "Mōryō-ga" (On the 'Mōryōga' Style of Zen Painting), parts 1, 2, *Bijutsu kenkyū*, no. 84 (December 1938), pp. 4–13; no. 86 (February 1939), pp. 8–11.

34. See Ogawa Hiromitsu, "Mokkei—Koten shugi no hen'yō" (Mu-ch'i—Transformation of Classicism), *Bijutsushi ronsō*, no. 4 (1988), pp. 95–112.
35. Of the three most influential Southern Sung Academy painters, Ma Yüan, Hsia Kuei, and Liu Sung-nien, the style of Liu Sung-nien is the least well defined. See Toda Teisuke, "Ryū Shōnen no shūhen" (Liu Sung-nien and His Environ), *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō*, no. 86 (1981), pp. 337–66.
36. One of the great accomplishments of the Southern Sung period was the widespread development of private schools in the provinces. See James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "Lüeh-lun Sung-tai ti-fang kuan-hsüeh ho ssu-hsüeh ti hsiao-chang" (On the Growth of Provincial Public and Private Schools During the Sung Dynasty), in *Liang-Sung-shih yen-chiu hui-pien* (Collection of Essays on the History of the Two Sungs) (Taipei: Lien-ching Ch'u-pan Shih-yeh Kung-ssu, 1987), pp. 211–27.
37. I am indebted to James C. Y. Watt, my colleague at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for this information.
38. See figure 84. In the autumn of the year 1275, less than a year before Lin-an was sacked by the invading Mongol armies, the Southern Sung scholar and connoisseur Chou Mi (1232–after 1308) had occasion to join a group visiting the Forbidden City. After paying their respects at the Right Civil Hall, they went by the main imperial library building, the Hall of the Mountain of the Tao, where they observed that a plaque of that name written by Emperor Li-tsung had replaced the original plaque written by Mi Yu-jen. Then they went to the Writer's Pavilion, where they saw a screen painting of bamboo and rock attributed to Su Shih. Behind the Writer's Pavilion was a garden with ancient cassia trees, columnal garden rocks, and several small pavilions. See Chou Mi, *Ch'i-tung yeh-yü* (Back Country Stories; preface dated 1291) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919), *chüan* 14, p. 1.
39. See Shih Shou-chien, "Nan-Sung ti liang-chung kuei-chien-hua" (Two Kinds of Didactic Painting in the Southern Sung Dynasty), *I-shu hsüeh*, no. 1 (1987), pp. 7–39, especially pp. 14–20. It is interesting that Emperor Li-tsung had asked Ma Lin, the leading academician and a specialist in landscape and flower painting, to execute these idealized portraits of ancient sages and worthies, rather than entrusting the commission to a professional portraitist.
40. For political symbolism in painting after the fall of the Sung, see James Cahill, *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yüan Dynasty, 1279–1368*, vol. 1 of *A History of Later Chinese Painting* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), pp. 15–19.
41. See Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150–1650: The Chin, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties*, translated by John Timothy Wixted (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 84–85.
42. For a full English translation of the text, see Kwan S. Wong, *Masterpieces of Sung and Yüan Dynasty Calligraphy from the John M. Crawford, Jr., Collection*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1981), pp. 52–54.
43. Ibid., p. 54.
44. See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, 27 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 26; see also Chapter 1, p. 60.
45. For Chao Meng-chien, see Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Sung Liao Chin hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Sung, Liao, and Chin Dynasties) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1984), pp. 742–55; see also Jiang Tiange (Chiang T'ien-ko), "Pien Chao Meng-chien yü Chao Meng-fu shih-chien ti kuan-hsi" (Arguments Concerning the Relationship Between Chao Meng-chien and Chao Meng-fu), *Wen-wu*, no. 12 (1962), pp. 26–31; and Xu Bangda, "Chao Meng-chien sheng-tsu nien-sui ting-cheng" (Examining the Dates of Chao Meng-chien's Birth and Death), in Xu Bangda, *Li-tai shu-hua chuan-chi k'ao-pien* (Studies on Painters' Biographies) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1983), pp. 20–23.
46. Aoki Masaru first contrasted two life-styles, the "elegant" and the "rustic," during the Sung period; see Aoki, "Sōjin shumi seikatsu no nitenkei" (Two Interesting Life-styles of the Sung Period), in *Sekai bijutsu zenshū geppō*, no. 6 (1951); reprinted in *Aoki Masaru zenshū* (Collection of the Writings of Aoki Masaru) (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1970), vol. 7, pp. 239–43. Maggie Bickford (in Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice*, pp. 31–32) has adapted Aoki's model to contrast Southern Sung academic with scholar-amateur plum painting.
47. Ch'en Kao-hua, *Sung Liao Chin*, p. 745.
48. See the first colophon on the scroll by Chou Mi (1232–1298); for a translation of Chou's poem, see Richard M. Barnhart, *Peach Blossom Spring: Gardens and Flowers in Chinese Painting*, exhib. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 39.
49. A quote from Ch'ü Yüan, "Li-sao" (On Encountering Sorrow). For a good English translation see David Hawkes, trans. and ann., *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1985).
50. See Shih Shou-chien, "The Eremitic Landscapes of Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235–before 1307)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1984); Ch'ien Hsüan's poem entitled

"Hating Books," in Li O and Ma Yüeh-kuan, eds., *Sung-shih chi-shih* (Topical Summaries of Sung History) (Taipei: Shang-wu Yin-shu-kuan, 1968), vol. 3, *chüan* 68, p. 1745.

51. See Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, "Yüan-tai ti ju-hu" (Confucian Households During the Yüan Period), in *Yüan-tai-shih hsin t'an* (New Explorations in Yüan Dynasty History) (Taipei, 1984), pp. 1–58.
52. See Tai Piao-yüan (1244–1310), *Yen-yüan-chi*, in *Tsung-shu chi-ch'eng* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935), vol. 2057, *chüan* 18, p. 272.
53. See Wen C. Fong, "The Problem of Ch'ien Hsüan," *Art Bulletin* 42 (September 1960), pp. 173–89.
54. See Robert E. Harrist, Jr., "Ch'ien Hsüan's *Pear Blossoms*: The Tradition of Flower Painting and Poetry from Sung to Yüan," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 22 (1987), pp. 53–70.
55. After translation by Witter Bynner, in Cyril Birch, comp. and ed., *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1, *From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 266–69.
56. According to the structuralist linguist and critic Roman Jakobson, poetic language functions between two poles, the metaphoric and the metonymic, creating a dichotomy between the principles of equivalence and contiguity. The metaphoric process allows the poet to "focus on the message for its own sake," dissociating the message from its referent. See Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Press of M.I.T.; New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960), p. 356.
57. See note 11 above.
58. Translation modified from Wai-kam Ho, in Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols: The Yüan Dynasty (1279–1368)*, exhib. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), no. 184.
59. See Frederick W. Mote, "Confucian Eremitism in the Yüan Period," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 220.
60. Chang Yü, *Ching-chü chi* (Collection from a Quiet Life), *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed. (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), *chüan* 3, pp. 7b–8b.
61. For Li Kung-lin's illustrations, see Thomas Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, II: Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), pp. 38–41.
62. Shih Shou-chien, in "Eremitic Landscapes of Ch'ien Hsüan," sees *Returning Home* as the image of a paradise receding irretrievably beyond Ch'ien's grasp.
63. For a discussion of this passage, see James Cahill, "Ch'ien Hsüan and His Figure Paintings," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 12 (1958), pp. 10–29; see also Ch'i Kung (Qi Gong), "Li-chia k'ao" (A Study of [the Term] *Li-chia*), in Ch'i Kung, *Ch'i Kung ts'ung kao* (Essays by Ch'i Kung) (Beijing: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1981), pp. 193–98; Wang Wei, "Lun Ch'ien Hsüan ti hui-hua i-shu chi li-lun" (A Discussion of the Painting and Theory of Ch'ien Hsüan), *Palace Museum Journal*, no. 2 (1985), pp. 53–59. For a translation of a conversation about theater in a similar vein attributed to Chao Meng-fu, see Wilt L. Idema and Stephen H. West, *Chinese Theater, 1100–1450: A Source Book* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), p. 129.



6 *Some Buddhist and Taoist Themes*

Founded by Siddhartha Gautama in the fifth century B.C., Buddhism is based on the Indian religious doctrines of *karma* (meaning "deed" or "act"), retribution, and rebirth. In mankind's seeming existence in the world of illusion, all beings live out a karmic fate. According to his karma of the past, a living being is subject to endless cycles of birth, retribution, rebirth, and suffering until the cycle is broken by salvation, or nirvana. There are two major traditions, or vehicles: Theravada, which teaches the discipline of the arhat (*lohan*, in Chinese, meaning a venerable disciple of Buddha, or "saint"), the ascetic who, by self-discipline, achieves individual nirvana, and Mahayana, or the Great Vehicle, which preaches the bodhisattva (enlightened being) ideal, that of a compassionate savior who postpones his own nirvana until all sentient beings are saved. While the former relies on individual effort, the latter emphasizes universal salvation through prayer and intercession.

Introduced from northwest India through Central Asia into Han dynasty China at the beginning of the Christian era, the basic tenets of Buddhism—most notably the practice of celibacy and the quest for otherworldliness—offered a philosophy fundamentally opposed to Chinese societal values, which emphasized family and social relations. Yet despite this conflict, Buddhism not only survived in China but had a profound influence on its religious outlook and social life.

In pre-Buddhist Han society, religion was a combination of ancient divination techniques, the theories of yin and yang and the five elements, and popular belief in immortals, gods, and shamanistic practices. One kind of teaching, known as religious or occult Taoism—as opposed to the philosophical Taoism of the ancient nature mystics Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu—was centered principally on the goal of achieving immortality in this life. Claiming both the legendary Yellow Emperor (Huang-ti) and Lao-tzu as its founders, followers of the so-called Huang–Lao practices specialized in the cultivation of the *ch'i*-breath and in alchemy—mainly the preparation of mercuric sulfide—for the nurturing of the immortal body. Occult Taoism not only enjoyed a wide following but also found favor with the Han emperors.

Popular religious faith in China combined indigenous Taoist and folk beliefs with Indian and Iranian traditions. When Buddhism first appeared in China, it was presented as an aspect of Taoism; the Buddha was seen either as a disciple of Lao-tzu or as associated with Taoist deities. Nevertheless, over time, competition between the two faiths led to persecution of Buddhism, as the

Attributed to Chih-weng (early 13th century). Detail from *Meeting Between Yao-shan and Li Ao* (pl. 77)

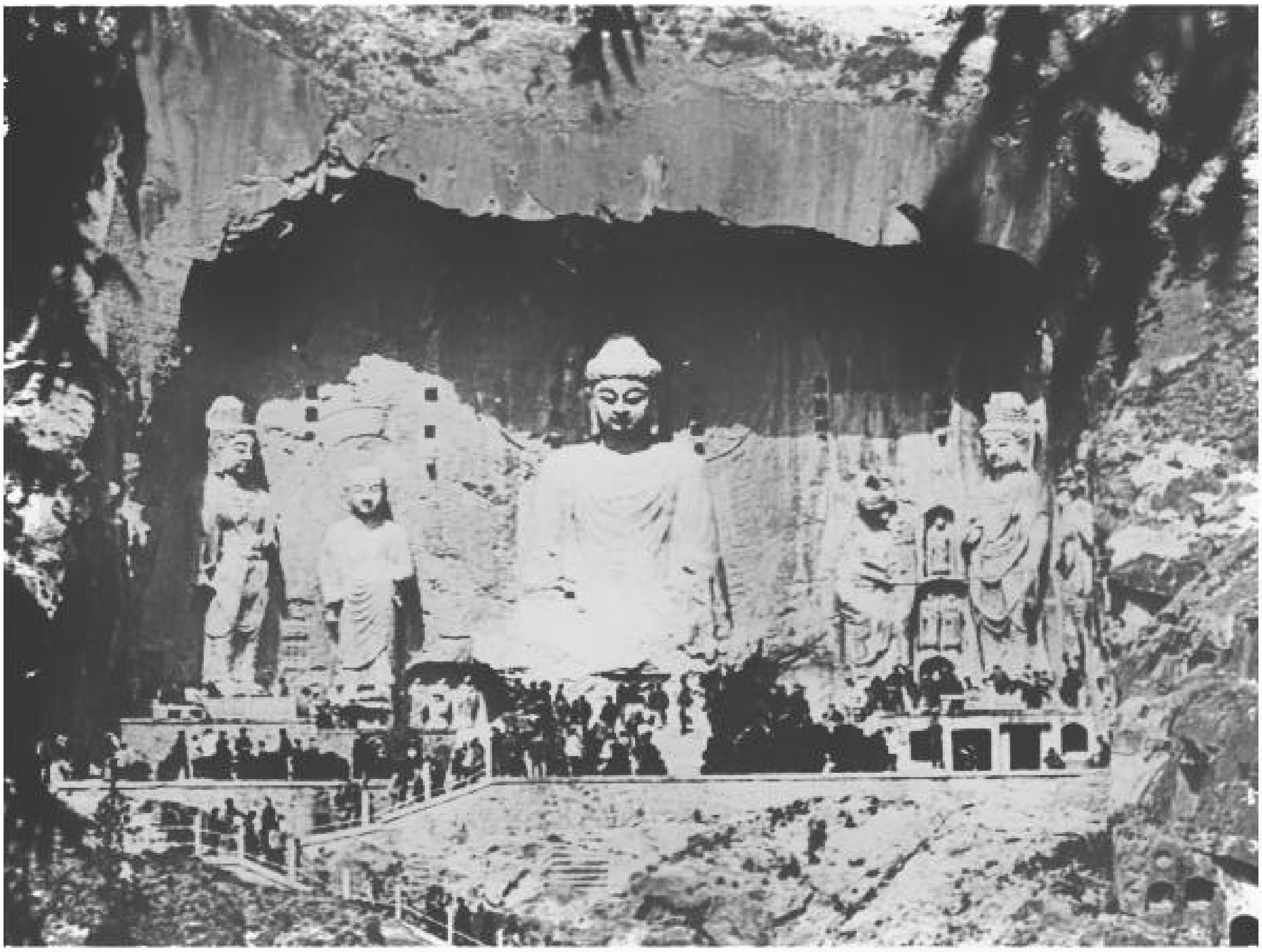


Fig. 137. *The Buddha Flanked by Disciples and Bodhisattvas*, dated 675. Height of central Buddha 56 ft. (17.14 m). Feng-hsien cave temple, Lung-men, Honan Province

imperial court played one off against the other in order to suppress the growth of organized religion within the empire. But despite its rivalry with Buddhism, religious Taoism emulated Buddhism's institutional organization and systematic teachings, freely borrowing from them in its development of an iconography and a canon of scripture.

During the T'ang dynasty (618–906), several schools of Buddhist philosophy that reflected distinctly Chinese characteristics emerged. By the seventh and eighth centuries, the form of Buddhism that had won the widest popular acceptance was the Mahayana Pure Land, or Western Paradise, sect, one of the less esoteric and less demanding schools, which taught universal salvation by faith and compassion.[1] Great monastic establishments flourished as a result, as wealthy donors and worshipers competed with one another in making lavish gifts to the temples as offerings to the Buddha. The popular Mahayanist text, the *Lotus Sutra*, became the most influential Buddhist scripture in China. The *Lotus* doctrine of One Vehicle embracing both the arhat and the bodhisattva vehicles is represented by the Chinese image of five figures, which shows the Buddha flanked by two arhats and two bodhisattvas, here exemplified in the colossi of Feng-hsien-ssu at Lung-men, completed in A.D. 675 (fig. 137).[2]

A second Buddhist sect that achieved great popularity during the T'ang dynasty was the Ch'an (Zen, in Japanese) school.[3] A basic tenet of Ch'an is the belief that because the Buddha-nature is found within oneself, rituals, scriptures, and icons are superfluous to the attainment of enlightenment. After the great persecution of 845–46, during which thousands of Buddhist temples and monuments were destroyed, temple property was confiscated, and hundreds of thousands of monks and nuns were forced to return to secular life, the iconoclastic Ch'an sect survived to emerge as a powerful social and intellectual force in the succeeding Sung period. Because of its belief in "wordlessness" and "forgetting oneself," Ch'an Buddhism struck a sympathetic chord with philosophical Taoism, and during the Northern Sung, increasing social intercourse between Confucian scholars and Ch'an priests further brought Ch'an Buddhism into the mainstream of Chinese life and thought.

By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, during the Jurchen Chin dynasty in the north and the Southern Sung dynasty in the south, a highly Sinicized Buddhism had become part of an integral religious system known as Three



Fig. 138. Rubbing of the engraved stele *Holy Portraits of the Three Religions*, dated 1209. 45¼ x 23⅝ in. (115 x 60 cm)

Overleaf
Pl. 72. Unidentified artist (early 12th century). *Vimalakirti Sutra*, dated January 13, 1119. Detail. Handscroll, gold and silver on purple silk, 11 x 312⅞ in. (27.9 x 795 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.2)



維摩詰經文殊師利問疾品第五
尒時佛告文殊師利汝行詣維摩詰問疾文
殊師利白佛言世尊彼上人者難為詶對深
達實相善說法要辯才無滯智慧無㝵一切
菩薩法式悉知諸佛祕藏無不得入降伏衆
魔遊戲神通其慧方便皆已得度雖然當承
佛聖旨詣彼問疾於是衆中諸菩薩大弟子



Religions in One. This coming together of the philosophies of the three religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—is represented in *Holy Portraits of the Three Religions* (fig. 138), an engraving dated 1209, which shows the Buddha flanked by Confucius on his right and Lao-tzu on his left. From this time onward, the influences of the three teachings were inseparable in all forms of Chinese art and culture, especially those of a popular origin.

The Vimalakirti Sutra

The *Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra* tells the story of Vimalakirti, a wise and powerful householder.[4] Upon learning that Vimalakirti is ailing, the Buddha asks his followers, the arhats and the bodhisattvas, to journey to the city of Vaisali to inquire after his health. The arhats decline, saying they are unworthy. So the Buddha sends Manjusri, the bodhisattva of wisdom. After Manjusri arrives in Vaisali, he and Vimalakirti are soon engaged in a theological debate. Their discussion ranges from the nature of Vimalakirti's ailment and the power of the Buddha to the transcendental nature of the Buddha's physical being; the householder, a brilliant speaker, dominates the conversation. Finally, Manjusri asks Vimalakirti to define the Buddhist doctrine of nonduality, the complementarity and mutual identification of reality and nonreality. His question is met with silence, and there the debate ends. Whereupon Manjusri exclaims: "Well done, well done! To have neither word nor letter is to enter into the doctrine of nonduality."[5] By his silence, the wise Vimalakirti follows the Buddha's own example of not applying human discourse on the phenomenal world to the ultimate reality; truth is not a matter for empirical observation.

A Mahayana text, the *Vimalakirti Sutra* found special favor with the Chinese, as it deals with such topics as being and nonbeing, appearance and reality, and the meaninglessness of such distinctions. The example of Vimalakirti also emphasizes the importance of the layman in the Buddhist faith, in that Vimalakirti—a layman householder with wife and children—appears to be a perfect Confucian scholar and gentleman.

The *Vimalakirti Sutra,* with frontispiece illustration (pl. 72, pp. 328–29), dated 1119, shows Vimalakirti, who has appeared miraculously above the city of Vaisali, seated on an elaborate canopy bed with screens and curtains. He is attended by a heavenly female deva who scatters flowers before him, and surrounded by a large retinue of bodhisattvas and deva guardians.[6] Here, the confrontation between Vimalakirti and Manjusri (who is not shown) is presented as a dramatic cosmic event, a scene of miraculous manifestations. The sky is filled with Buddha figures riding on cloud scrolls, while below, in the city of Vaisali, Vimalakirti, surrounded by his followers, returns to his worldly domain.

The sutra, in gold and silver on purple-dyed silk, was a gift to a Sung envoy from the ruler of the kingdom of Ta-li (modern Yünnan Province), and the Vimalakirti illustration is based on monumental temple-wall decorations deriving ultimately from a famous composition by the fourth-century painter Ku K'ai-chih.[7] In Cave 335, dated A.D. 686 (fig. 139), at Tun-huang, the scene,

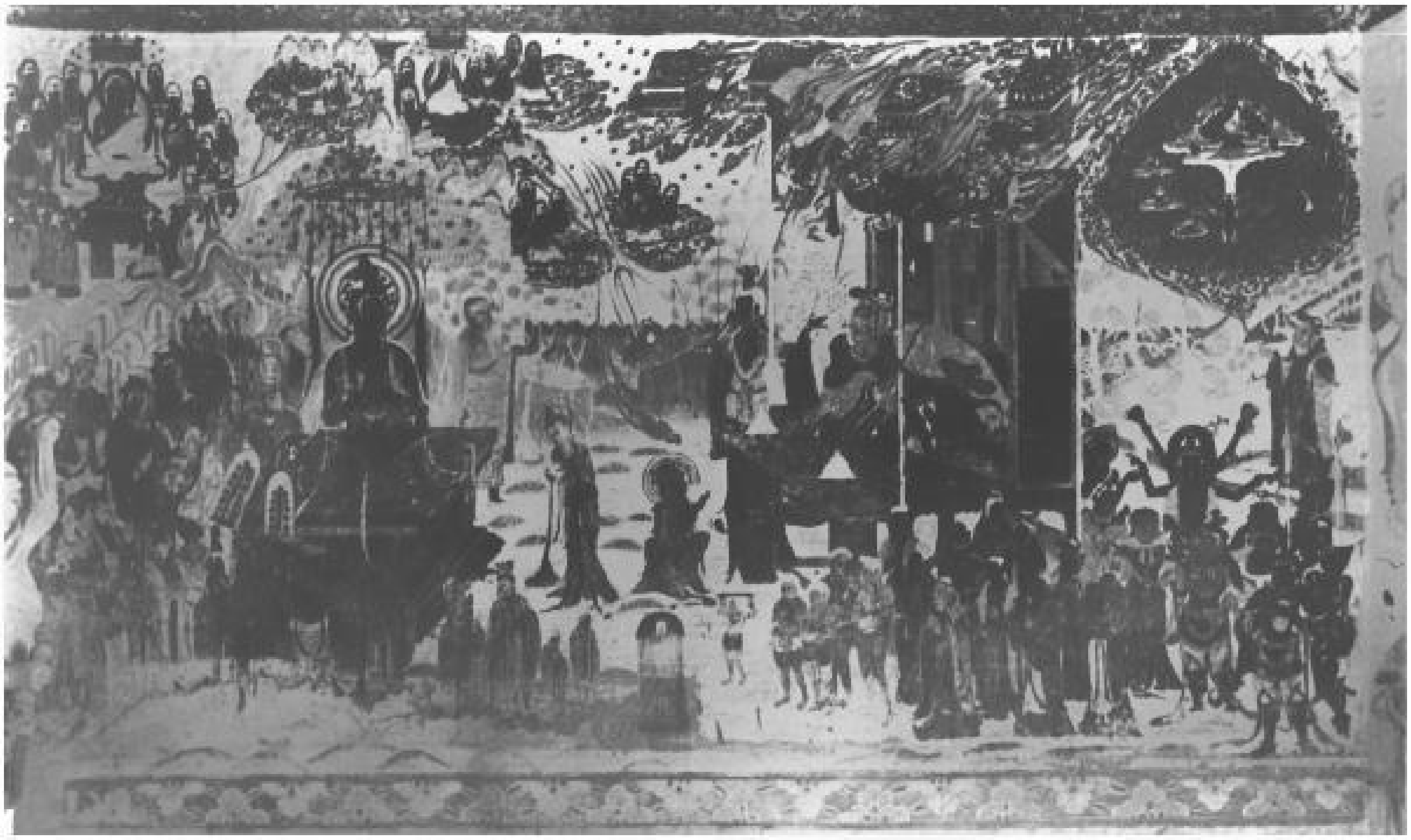


Fig. 139. *Vimalakirti and Manjusri*, dated 686. Wall painting from Cave 335, Tun-huang, Kansu Province

which covers a large wall, is presented as a great cosmic drama in full color. Manjusri, at left, is shown on a dais facing Vimalakirti, who is seated on a canopied bed; between them are illustrations of various miracles described in the sutra, and behind them is the crenelated wall of Vaisali. In the foreground are donor figures and an emperor with attendants. The sky is filled with celestial beings and bodhisattvas, with visions of the enthroned Buddha on the left and Mount Sumeru on the right.[8]

A very different presentation of the same story is seen in the scroll *Vimalakirti and the Doctrine of Nonduality* (pl. 73), dated 1308 and done in an ink outline, or plain drawing, style by the early Yüan court painter Wang Chen-p'eng (active ca. 1280–1329). According to Wang's inscription, written after 1320, the scroll, commissioned in 1308 by the Yüan emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1311–20), then heir apparent, was a preparatory drawing for a fully colored version.[9] Wang noted that he had based his composition on a painting by the Chin court painter Ma Yün-ch'ing (active ca. 1230),[10] which was itself modeled on a work by Li Kung-lin. A scroll formerly attributed to Li, *Vimalakirti Preaching the Doctrine* (fig. 140), appears to be a work by Ma Yün-ch'ing.

In Wang's painting the colorful, theatrical presentation of the T'ang mural has been transformed into a simple Ch'an-influenced meditation. Here, a gentle, emaciated-looking Vimalakirti holds up his right hand in the gesture of a Ch'an mentor teaching the doctrine of nonduality in silence—in Manjusri's description, with "neither word nor letter."[11] At left, the heavenly deva attendant tosses flower petals, signs of human desire, on the arhat Sariputra (pl. 73a),



who tries desperately to shake them off. Reflecting the early Yüan master Chao Meng-fu's emphasis on calligraphic brushwork, Wang Chen-p'eng's plain drawing style is tightly controlled, with the round and centered brushstroke made to resemble a smoothly flowing iron-wire line. Wang uses this technique to describe realistic organic figures.

Pl. 73. Wang Chen-p'eng (active ca. 1280–1329). *Vimalakirti and the Doctrine of Nonduality*, dated 1308. Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 15½ x 85¾ in. (39.5 x 217.7 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1980 (1980.276)

Ten Kings of Hell

During the T'ang dynasty, the Indian Ghost Festival, which represented a merging of the Indian belief in metempsychosis with the Chinese tradition of sacrificing to the ancestors, became a cult event.[12] And by the Five Dynasties period in the tenth century, a time of great destruction and suffering, the cult of the underworld, the representation of the horrors of hell and the promise of salvation, had reached full fruition. Based on the *Ten Kings Sutra*, an apocryphal scripture attributed to a tenth-century monk named Ts'ang-ch'uan from the Ta-sheng-tz'u monastery in Ch'eng-tu, Szechwan Province,[13] the cult of the Ten Kings reflected paternalistic Confucian values of harsh justice and loving forgiveness. It also united the Chinese tradition of moral ethics with the Indian belief in karma and divine retribution to create a philosophy that embraced accountability for one's deeds in life and unmitigated punishment for sinners in death, from which the only means of salvation was prayer for intercession in hell by the compassionate bodhisattva Ti-tsang.

In Buddhist doctrine, there are six forms of existence: buddha, human, demon, animal, hungry ghost, and denizen of hell; only buddhas live in paradise, or nirvana, while the other five, all susceptive to the inexorable laws of karmic causation and retribution, are subjected to various forms of suffering,

Fig. 140. Attributed to Ma Yün-ch'ing (active ca. 1230). Formerly attributed to Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *Vimalakirti Preaching the Doctrine*. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13¾ x 81½ in. (34.8 x 207.1 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing



the most extreme of which is eternal damnation in hell. The souls of those who die penitent are sent to purgatory, where they remain until their rebirth in another form; the moral balance of their past deeds determines whether they are reborn as humans, animals, or hungry ghosts. *Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (Ti-tsang) with the Ten Kings of Hell* (fig. 141), a mid-tenth-century painting from Tun-huang, shows the compassionate bodhisattva of the underworld,







Fig. 141. *Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (Ti-tsang) with the Ten Kings of Hell*, mid-10th century. Painting from Tun-huang, Kansu Province, ink, color, and gold on silk, 18 15/16 x 16 3/16 in. (48.1 x 41.1 cm). British Museum, London

who vows to end the sufferings of all sentient beings, enthroned above the Ten Kings of Hell, the merciless judges of the nether regions.[14] The six bands of light that issue from the sides of the central deity signal the six paths of rebirth.

According to the *Ten Kings Sutra*, one who has recently died, if he successfully withstands trial by the first of the ten kings in purgatory, can be reborn on the seventh day after death. If not, he faces a different king every seventh day, for a total of seven times during the first forty-nine days after death; thereafter, he goes to the eighth trial on the one-hundredth day, the ninth on the first anniversary of his arrival in purgatory, and the tenth on the third anniversary. Ritual offerings and good deeds performed on behalf of the dead are made with the hope of reversing or mitigating the cycle of causation and thereby assisting the soul's successful journey to rebirth. The worship of the Ten Kings was so pervasive that it became a part of the mortuary services of all classes in Chinese society and an activity independent of organized religion.[15]

Pl. 73a. Detail, pl. 73

In the *Ten Kings Sutra* (fig. 142), a late tenth-century scroll from Tun-huang, the soul's journey through the ten tribunals of hell is depicted in vivid





Pls. 74a–g. Chin Ch'u-shih (late 12th century). *Ten Kings of Hell*, before 1195. Five of a set of ten hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, 44 x 18¾ in. (111.8 x 47.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.76.290–294)

Pl. 74a. *Ten Kings of Hell*. Detail, the fifth king, Yama

Pl. 74b. Detail, pl. 74a





Pl. 74c. *Ten Kings of Hell*. Detail, sinners being turned into beasts of labor



Pl. 74d. *Ten Kings of Hell*. Detail, woman in a cangue



Pl. 74e. *Ten Kings of Hell*. Detail, caged prisoners



Pl. 74f. *Ten Kings of Hell*. Detail, the infernal machine





detail. Each scene, conceived as a typical Chinese magistrate's courtroom, shows one of the kings of hell seated behind a draped table and attended by scribes, officers of records, and demon-constables, while the sinners, wearing wooden cangues and clad in loincloths, are herded on until they reach the last tribunal, where their past deeds are weighed in a balance. They are then sent on to be reborn as humans, animals, demons, hungry ghosts, or denizens of hell.[16]

Ten Kings of Hell (pls. 74a–g), a set of hanging scrolls datable to before 1195, five of which are now in the Metropolitan Museum, represents the high moment of genre-narrative Buddhist art during the Southern Sung dynasty.[17] The vivid colors, typical of popular Buddhist imagery, were achieved by the application of paints to both sides of the silk surface. While much of the silk in the unpainted areas has disintegrated with age, the painted surfaces, with the silk sandwiched between two layers of pigment, have held firm with the binding. The excellent quality of both the pigments and the silk, together with the highly accomplished technical level of the painting, suggests that those who commissioned the works were affluent individuals with cultivated aesthetic standards.

Each scroll bears the inscription, written in cinnabar: "The Great Sung [dynasty], at Ming-chou [Ning-po], the Carriage Bridge, West, Painted at the House of Chin Ch'u-shih" (fig. 143).[18] The paintings, originally preserved in Japan, were brought by Buddhist pilgrims and merchants during the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries from Ning-po, a port city in Chekiang Province. Stylistically, the paintings compare closely with the *Five Hundred Lohans* of

Preceding pages
Pl. 74g. Detail, pl. 74f



Fig. 142. *Ten Kings Sutra*, late 10th century. Detail. Handscroll from Tun-huang, Kansu Province, ink and color on paper, 11 x approx. 195 in. (28 x approx. 495 cm). British Museum, London



Fig. 143. Detail, seal inscription on pl. 74d

Lin T'ing-kuei and Chou Chi-ch'ang, datable to 1178–88 (see figs. 144 and following), and because the name Ming-chou, which appears in the inscription, was changed to Ch'ing-yüan-fu in 1195,[19] the paintings can be dated securely to the third or fourth quarter of the twelfth century, during the reigns of Emperors Hsiao-tsung and Kuang-tsung.

Each composition of the *Ten Kings of Hell* is divided into two tiers, with a courtroom scene above showing an interrogation and the passing of judgment and below a scene in hell depicting the damned subjected to torture. In each of the courtroom scenes, behind a desk and seated on a draped, high-backed carved throne, is one of the Kings of Hell, resplendent in court robe and jeweled crown. The Indian and Chinese features of the kings reflect their names as given in the *Ten Kings Sutra*.[20] Behind each of the kings is a painted landscape screen set against carved and lacquered balustrades, over which plants and flowers in the adjoining courtyard garden can be seen. Fiercest of the kings is the fifth, King Yama (pl. 74a), who confronts the accused with the crime displayed in the karmic mirror: the murder of an unfortunate man in a boat (pl. 74b). After all the records have been reviewed and sins confessed and verified, judgments are passed. In one scene, two sinners are turned into beasts of labor (pl. 74c); in another, a woman in a cangue, with a child pitifully hanging on to her, is dragged down to hell (pl. 74d). In the lower half of the paintings, torture is at its most gruesome: one demon jabs at caged prisoners with his spear (pl. 74e), another tosses the condemned into a field of sharp blades (pl. 74c), and two others boil the prisoners in a caldron (pl. 74d). In yet another scene, an enormous infernal machine with flaming wheels driven by a giant demon mows down and chews up fleeing hungry ghosts (pls. 74f, g).

Part of the popular culture of late twelfth-century Sung China, the explicitness and sensationalism of the *Ten Kings* exemplify the kind of genre realism traditionally suppressed in Confucian symbolic narratives and court-sponsored paintings. But just as the popular Pure Land Paradise Buddhism had coexisted with Ch'an meditation in Sung monastic establishments, these gory passion plays of saints and demons lived side by side with contemplative ink paintings of landscapes and scholars.

The Visual Culture

During the Southern Sung, the city of Ning-po, where the *Ten Kings of Hell* was made, was a thriving seaport that traded with Japan and a great center for the production of Buddhist devotional images. The *Five Hundred Lohans*, a set of one hundred paintings dated from 1178 to 1188, is the largest extant group of Southern Sung narrative Buddhist paintings.[21] The project was initiated by Abbot I-shao of Hui-an-yüan, a great Buddhist monastery located southeast of Ning-po, and carried out by two Ning-po artisan painters, Chou Chi-ch'ang and Lin T'ing-kuei, who were perhaps members of the workshop attached to the monastery or recruits from one of the several commercial enterprises in Ning-po that specialized in producing religious icons.[22] Known as the Lo-han-yüan,

or Chapel of Lohans, the monastery was first established in the year 938 to commemorate the appearance in 904 of sixteen lohans on All Souls' Feast Day.[23] The representation of lohan images was thus closely associated with the All Souls' Feast, during which the lohans now played the role of compassionate saviors guiding humanity through the journey of suffering to universal salvation.[24]

The dedicatory inscriptions on the paintings disclose information about the pattern of patronage that enabled the support of ambitious projects such as this, as well as the professional painting workshop system that produced them.[25] Rather than coming from one or two major sources, funds for the *Five Hundred Lohans* were collected from many donors over a period of ten years. Individuals contributed just enough money to pay for one more scroll, often

Fig. 144. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *The Making of the Five Hundred Lohans*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, set of 100 paintings, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

Fig. 145. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Feast of the Lohans*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto









Fig. 146. Detail, fig. 145

Fig. 147. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). Detail from *Lohans Viewing an Image of the Buddha Amitabha*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

asking that it serve as an offering for the soul of a deceased relative. Many donors were residents of nearby villages.[26] Most of them seem to have been prosperous, and only three bore official titles.[27] In the title piece of the series (fig. 144), five lohans are shown seated above two donors on the left and Abbot I-shao and an attendant on the right. The donors are dressed in commoners' garb rather than that of court officials. The attendant holds a plaque inscribed "The Making of the Five Hundred Lohans."

The *Five Hundred Lohans* was displayed at the monastery on special feast days and during funeral services of wealthy donors. On such occasions, the hangings were mounted on special altars alongside images of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, creating a symbolic Mahayana Pure Land Paradise.[28] One of the hangings, the *Feast of the Lohans* (fig. 145), shows a company of five lohans descending from the clouds to pay a visitation on a noble family as they make offerings from a garden pavilion overlooking a lotus pond. Before an altar table decked with incense and flowers, a priest leads the family in prayer, while senior members of the family, formally attired in court robes, fall on their knees to receive the saints. Along the veranda wall behind the pavilion, where servants prepare for a buffet, is a set of scroll paintings (fig. 146) that, like the very painting in which they appear, shows lohans. In private worship, such portable sets of images were brought out on special occasions, then stored for safekeeping. One can imagine that the family portrayed here owned a set of the *Ten Kings of Hell*, which they would display perhaps on feast days to commemorate the deaths of family members.

The traditional craft of painting was based on the replication of images through stencils. In *Lohans Viewing an Image of the Buddha Amitabha*



Pl. 75. Unidentified artist (13th century). *The Buddha Amitabha Welcoming Souls into the Pure Land Paradise.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 53½ x 23 in. (136 x 58.5 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1980 (1980.275)



Fig. 148. Stencil of a Buddha, mid-10th century. From Tun-huang, Kansu Province, ink on paper with pricked outlines from a design on verso, 12 13/16 x 10 7/16 in. (32.5 x 26.5 cm). British Museum, London

(fig. 147), the lohans gather to admire a scroll painting that represents Amitabha, the Buddha of the Pure Land Paradise, as he welcomes souls into his realm. This scene was part of the standard Buddhist repertory. *The Buddha Amitabha Welcoming Souls into the Pure Land Paradise* (pl. 75) is another version of this image. This scroll, datable to the early thirteenth century, was, according to a fragmentary inscription, "painted at Ch'ing-yüan-fu [the name of Ning-po from 1195 to 1276], to the east of Washing Horse Bridge [not far from Hui-an-yüan, where the *Five Hundred Lohans* was produced]." The painting was made from a stencil with pinholes such as those seen in a T'ang dynasty stencil from Tun-huang (fig. 148). In murals as well as silk paintings, such images were executed in a three-stage process. First, an assistant would transfer the image from the stencil to a painting surface by means of pricking the holes with ink or white powder. Then a master painter would work up the form with brush drawing. And finally, the assistant would complete the painting by filling in the colors.[19]

In painting the *Ten Kings of Hell*, the master at the House of Chin Ch'u-shih also worked from stencil patterns. Mixing fantasy with an intensely realistic style, the *Ten Kings of Hell* affords a glimpse of the popular imagination of the time. While the physical setting—the richly colored and embroidered silks, exquisite furnishings, and sumptuous decorations of the courtroom scenes—represents the Southern Sung experience of the material world, the





Fig. 149. Lin T'ing-kuei (active late 12th century). *Lohan Performing a Miracle,* from *Five Hundred Lohans,* datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

Fig. 150. Attributed to Chang Yüan (active ca. 890–930). *Standing Lohan.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 58⅝ x 29½ in. (149 x 74.9 cm). Osaka Municipal Museum of Art

figural representations are pure theater, no doubt inspired by ritual reenactments of Buddhist lore staged in temple festivals and at bazaars, where motifs such as King Yama with his karmic mirror, sinners turning into animals, or the various scenes of terror and torture were also stock themes.

Basing their work on the same repertory of themes, the professional painters of Ning-po sold their products on the strength of their ability to incorporate into conventional stencil patterns their own distinctive and innovative style. In *Lohan Performing a Miracle,* by Lin T'ing-kuei (fig. 149), for example, one of the standing figures is a mirror image of a standing lohan attributed to the tenth-century painter Chang Yüan (fig. 150). Lin T'ing-kuei, through the use of a stencil, incorporates the figure into a dramatic composition of lohans performing a miracle. He displays a square brushwork, with sharp, angular drapery folds, devil-face rocks, and crab-claw trees in the Kuo Hsi manner of landscape painting.[10] The powerful brushwork is especially suited to the representation of the dramatic, action-filled scene.

Ch'an Painting

The legendary Indian monk Bodhidharma is said to have arrived in China in the year 520 or 527. After an unsuccessful audience with the Liang dynasty emperor Wu-ti (r. 502–49), Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtze River and proceeded to the Shao-lin Temple on Mount Sung, Honan Province, and there he

sat for nine years in meditation, or trance (*dhyana*, in Sanskrit, from which the word *Ch'an* is derived). The early followers of Bodhidharma were ascetic monks in search of a direct, intuitive approach to enlightenment, the realization of Buddhahood through meditation. In their attempt to reach enlightenment without the aid of scriptures and institutionalized worship, early Ch'an masters borrowed the Taoist belief in subitism, that understanding is wordless and can be transmitted only from mind to mind.[31]

In 700, the revered Ch'an monk Shen-hsiu (605?–706), the Sixth Ch'an Patriarch after Bodhidharma, was honored by an invitation to the capital by the T'ang empress Wu (r. 690–705). Shen-hsiu's approach to Ch'an, described as Gradual Enlightenment—which recalls the Threefold Meditation of the T'ien-t'ai school—involved a four-part "purification of the mind" that proceeded from concentrating the mind through meditation and physical exercises; settling the mind to banish thought; deepening insight to comprehend the emptiness of things; and inner verification of the state of release from the differentiated world.[32] A very different approach to Ch'an is seen in the philosophy of Hui-neng (638–713), an illiterate laborer turned ascetic from the south, whose teachings were disseminated by a monk from Honan named Shen-hui (670–762), who claimed that Hui-neng was the true inheritor of Bodhidharma's mantle. Hui-neng's approach, influenced by Taoist insight and thus described as Sudden Enlightenment, taught that when the mind is completely emptied and void, when "all paths of language are destroyed" and "all ways of the mind are cut off," there occurs a spontaneous psychic insight into the absolute nature of the phenomenal world. Shen-hui's brilliant, radical teaching of "the sword that must directly pierce through" and destroy the need for all scripture, ritual, and formal meditation technique won popular following. In 796, a council of Ch'an masters was convened by the court to settle the dispute about the lineage of Ch'an transmission. An imperial decree declared Shen-hui the Seventh Patriarch, thereby recognizing, by implication, his teacher Hui-neng as the Sixth Patriarch. Thereafter, Shen-hsiu's Gradual Enlightenment, known as the Northern School of Ch'an, declined, and Hui-neng's so-called Southern School of Sudden Enlightenment predominated.[33]

During the ninth century, when the Buddhist church was subjected to its worst persecutions, the radical, iconoclastic Ch'an held tremendous popular appeal. But the Ch'an movement, which began as a revolt against institutionalized religion, itself became a powerful organized religion. Because the success of any religious teaching depended upon imperial patronage and support, all great Ch'an masters necessarily possessed a dual persona, one official and political and the other spiritual.

Wu-chun (ca. 1178–1249), a famous Ch'an master from Chien-chou, Szechwan Province, and a teacher at Mount T'ien-t'ai in Chekiang, was invited to court by the Southern Sung emperor Li-tsung to discourse on Ch'an. Li-tsung bestowed on him the title Buddha-Mirror Ch'an Master and appointed him Abbot of Ching-shan-ssu, a monastery near the capital, Lin-an. A finely drawn, highly realistic likeness of Wu-chun enthroned as a great Ch'an



Pl. 76. Unidentified artist (mid-13th century). *Ch'an Master Riding a Mule*, before 1249. Inscribed by Wu-chun (ca. 1178–1249). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 25¼ x 13 in. (64.2 x 33 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.24)



Fig. 151. Unidentified artist (13th century). *Portrait of the Ch'an Master Wu-chun*, dated 1238. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 48¾ x 21¾ in. (123.8 x 55.2 cm). Tōfuku-ji, Kyoto

patriarch in full ecclesiastical vestments (fig. 151), a picture painted in full color on silk has an inscription dated 1238 by the master himself, dedicating the portrait to a visiting Japanese priest.

A very different Wu-chun is seen in an ink outline painting, the *Ch'an Master Riding a Mule* (pl. 76), which bears the cryptic inscription, also autograph:

> The rains come, it is dark in the mountains.
> He sees a mule, and mistakes it for a horse.[34]

Wu-chun's dual persona as an imperially appointed high clergyman and an iconoclastic eccentric searching for enlightenment is consciously patterned after that of the ninth-century Ch'an monk-painter Kuan-hsiu, the Grand Master of Ch'an Moon (832–912), who is thought to have painted self-portraits in the guise of lohans.[35] In Sung popular imagination, Taoist immortals and



Pl. 77. Attributed to Chih-weng (early 13th century). *Meeting Between Yao-shan and Li Ao*, before 1256. Inscribed by Yen-hsi Kuang-wen (1189–1263). Horizontal panel mounted as a hanging scroll, ink on paper, 33⅛ x 12¼ in. (84.1 x 31.1 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.2.1)

"living lohans," as miracle-working saviors of the world, often roamed city streets disguised as eccentrics or beggars. (The painting recalls the pale ink drawing on the courtyard wall of the Taoist immortal Lü Tung-pin riding a mule; see pl. 61.) Stylistically, the *Ch'an Master Riding a Mule* is an "ink play" that traces its origins to the eccentric "untrammeled" painters of the T'ang dynasty.[36] Except for the face, which shows carefully delineated, individualized features (high bulging forehead, mustache, and wispy beard) similar to those of the formal portrait (fig. 151), the ink drawing on paper is executed with a bold, simplified brushstroke, suggesting spontaneity and mystic oneness with the subject.

The *Meeting Between Yao-shan and Li Ao* (pl. 77), attributed to the early thirteenth-century Ch'an painter Chih-weng, depicts the famous encounter between the Neo-Confucian scholar Li Ao (died ca. 840) and the Ch'an master Yao-shan, a story recounted in the early eleventh-century text the *Ching-te Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*.[37] Meeting the renowned Ch'an mentor, the scholar was disappointed by the master's lack of response to his quest for



truth and remarked, "Seeing you face-to-face is not as exciting as hearing about your great reputation." Whereupon the master replied, "Would you trust what you hear rather than what you see?" And in answer to the question "What is Tao?" the master pointed up and down, indicating that the ultimate reality is what you can see, such as "the clouds in the sky and the water in my flower vase." An inscription on the painting, by Yen-hsi Kuang-wen, reads:

> The moment of enlightenment comes in a flash,
> Why do we mistrust what we see and value what we hear?
> Do not say there is no truth
> Between the water and the clouds.

A depiction of a meeting between two individuals, the painting recalls Li Kung-lin's picture of two men greeting each other at a roadside (fig. 20). The style of this and similar Ch'an ink paintings, with its pale ink tones and sensitive brushwork, is known as apparition painting.[18] It was developed by a monk-painter, Chih-yung (1114–1193), who spent his last years at Ling-yin-ssu, where



Pl. 78. Li Yao-fu (active ca. 1300). *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangtze River on a Reed*, before 1317. Inscribed by I-shan I-ning (died 1317). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 33¾ x 13⅜ in. (85.6 x 34.1 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.1.2)



Fig. 152. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Five Lohans Crossing the River*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 43⅞ x 20⅞ in. (111.5 x 53.1 cm). Gift of Denmon Waldo Ross, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (06.291)

Yen-hsi Kuang-wen served as abbot from 1254 to 1256. The transparent technique seems almost to express the perception espoused by Ch'an Buddhism of existence as emptiness.

Despite its iconoclasm, Ch'an spirituality depended on symbolic resources of words and images. The hanging scroll *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangtze River on a Reed* (pl. 78) depicts Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch, crossing the Yangtze River after his unsuccessful interview with the Liang emperor. The scroll is signed in the lower left by Li Yao-fu and inscribed by I-shan I-ning, a renowned Yüan dynasty Ch'an priest sent by the emperor Ch'eng-tsung (r. 1294–1307) as his emissary to Japan in 1299. The inscription reads:

> Crossing rivers and deserts he came.
> Facing the emperor he confessed, "I don't know";
> Unsuccessful, he moved on,
> His feet treading on the water.





Fig. 153. After Kuan-hsiu (832–912). *Lohan Reading a Sutra*, from *The Sixteen Lohans*, set of 16 paintings. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 36¼ x 17⅞ in. (92.2 x 45.4 cm). Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo

In conventional Buddhist iconography, such as is seen in Chou Chi-ch'ang's *Five Lohans Crossing the River* (fig. 152), Bodhidharma, standing on the reed and leading four other lohans across the Yangtze, is depicted as in a pageant, with colorful theatricality. But in Li Yao-fu's pale ink-outline representation, the ascetic monk, in a plain robe, becomes a symbol of forbearance and suffering; the rendering of the face, subtly reflecting the holy man's foreign features, captures a sense of spiritual concentration. Removed from its narrative context, the isolated image of Bodhidharma itself became the focus of Ch'an meditation and worship.[39]

Ch'an Buddhism defined its methods and techniques through the strict observation of monastic discipline. The center of Ch'an life in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the sparse rectangular meditation hall, within which one observed the rule of silence.[40] From early morning to night, after attending to their various chores and servicing the monastery, the monks followed a rigid daily routine of lessons in meditation and circumambulation. Having renounced physical passion and material possessions, the monk learned through meditation and physical labor the serenity and ecstasy of metaphysical

Pl. 79. Unidentified artist (early 14th century). *Reading a Sutra by Moonlight*. Inscribed by Yü-hsi Ssu-min (died 1337). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 47 x 13⅛ in. (119.4 x 33.3 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.3.2)

Overleaf
Pl. 79a. Detail, pl. 79







Pl. 80. Unidentified artist (late 14th century). *White-Robed Kuan-yin*, before 1391. Inscribed by Tsung-le (1318–1391). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 35⅞ x 12⅞ in. (91 x 32.6 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.3.3)



Fig. 154. Assistant to Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Viewing an Image of the White-Robed Kuan-yin*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, datable to 1178–88. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

existence. *Reading a Sutra by Moonlight* (pl. 79), by an unidentified early fourteenth-century Ch'an painter, bears an inscription (reading from left to right, in imitation of Sanskrit) by the priest Yü-hsi Ssu-min (died 1337), who served as the Abbot of Pao-fu-ssu in Hangchow from about 1310 to 1332:

> In this one volume of sutra,
> The words have no clear meaning.
> The sun rises, the moon sets,
> When will I finish reading it?

This image of a seated lohan with long eyebrows reading a sutra derives ultimately from *The Sixteen Lohans* of Kuan-hsiu (fig. 153), a late ninth-century painter who first illustrated the canonical group of the Sixteen Lohans as described in the text *Record of the Duration of the Law*.[41] In Kuan-hsiu's paintings, sixteen seated lohans, most of them with Indian features, are shown reading sutras and meditating.[42] As the cult of the lohans gained increasing popularity during the Sung period, lohans came to be depicted as having Chinese characteristics and as living in Chinese monastic settings, where they studied, collated, and chanted scripture. The old monk in *Reading a Sutra by Moonlight* (pl. 79), who pulls at his long eyebrow while he struggles with his task, is humorously represented. Compared with earlier Ch'an apparition paintings (pl. 77), the broad, sweeping brushwork, rather than describing the drapery folds, calligraphically expresses the intensity of the monk's concentration as he puzzles over the written word.

Ch'an Buddhism, along with the general decline of Buddhism by the early Ming period (1368–1644), was weakened by its increasing effort to harmonize



Pl. 81a. Chang Yü-ts'ai (r. 1295–1316). *Beneficent Rain.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 10⅝ x 106¾ in. (27 x 271.4 cm). Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1985 (1985.227.2)

with the teachings of other Buddhist schools. *White-Robed Kuan-yin* (pl. 80), by an unidentified late fourteenth-century early Ming painter, bears an inscription by the eminent Ch'an priest Tsung-le (1318–1391), who, as the Abbot of T'ien-chieh-ssu, near Nanking, first around 1375 and later from 1388 to 1391, was the leading Buddhist cleric under the first Ming emperor, T'ai-tsu (r. 1368–98). The inscription reads:

> Like a speck of dust, ephemeral is the body,
> So is the doctrine ephemeral, like a speck of dust.
> Only when all sentient beings and the world attain emptiness
> Will Kuan-yin's all-compassionate heart rest.

The doctrine that entire Buddha worlds may be found in a speck of dust was the teaching of the Hua-yen school, while the calling forth of Kuan-yin, the goddess of mercy, was a practice of the Pure Land school. By turning Ch'an meditation into ritualized recitation and by invoking the names of the Pure Land Paradise Buddha and the bodhisattvas, Ch'an Buddhism during the Ming period became closely allied with Pure Land Buddhism.[43] The conventionalizing of early Ming Ch'an seems to be reflected in *White-Robed Kuan-yin*, the drawing of which is now a smooth calligraphic formula.

Kuan-yin (Avalokitesvara, in Sanskrit), the Buddha Amitabha's principal lieutenant in the Pure Land Paradise and a symbol of compassion, was transformed during the late T'ang period into the Chinese goddess of mercy, Water-and-Moon Kuan-yin.[44] Late T'ang paintings depict the elaborately costumed and jeweled Indian deity Avalokitesvara at his abode on Mount Potolaka. Then, in the 1080s, Li Kung-lin transformed the Indian icon into the Chinese image, the White-Robed Kuan-yin, now residing at her Chinese home, Mount P'u-t'o, in Chekiang Province. A twelfth-century version of White-Robed Kuan-



yin, reflecting Li Kung-lin's innovation, is seen in the *Five Hundred Lohans* (fig. 154), where the lohans are shown worshiping an image of the goddess.

By the early Ming period, Buddhism ceased to be a dynamic creative and social force. But what remained was its influence on Chinese philosophy. The belief, shared by the Neo-Confucian School of the Mind, that all things of the phenomenal world are products of the mind and thus without ultimate significance reinforced the Chinese tendency to turn, in times of trouble, to self-cultivation and withdrawal from the world rather than to struggle for an ideal human society.

Magic Realism

Founded as an organized religion by the Celestial Master Chang Tao-ling in the late second century A.D., religious Taoism, as opposed to philosophical Taoism, played an important role in popular rebellions and secret societies in China from the end of the Han period. The bitter rivalry between Taoism and Buddhism was an important contributing factor in the persecution of Buddhism throughout Chinese history. The T'ang emperor Wu-tsung's (r. 840–46) attempt to eradicate Buddhism in 845 was, for example, instigated by his trusted Taoist adviser. After steadily gaining influence during the Northern Sung, Taoism achieved great power under Hui-tsung (r. 1100–25), the Taoist emperor. It continued to be popular in northern China after the invasion of the Jurchen Chin, and Taoist priests, who practiced divination, fortune-telling, and shamanism, became powerful advisers to the Mongol conquerors. Although the Mongols (beginning with Khubilai Khan) favored Tibetan Lamaism over Taoism, they found the Taoist church organization useful in aiding their

Overleaf
Pl. 81b. Detail from *Beneficent Rain*







Fig. 155. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). Detail from *Lohans Putting the Eyes into a Dragon*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, datable to 1178–88. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

conquest of southern China, and southern Taoists became the official conduit between the Mongols and the southern Chinese.[45]

The thirty-eighth Taoist Celestial Master, Chang Yü-ts'ai (r. 1295–1316), lived at Dragon-Tiger Mountain, Kiangsi Province. In addition to being a religious leader, Chang was a famous rainmaker and painter. A favorite of the Yüan emperors, he received special commendation from the court for inducing rain and for subduing a "tidal monster" that had plagued the eastern coast. In *Beneficent Rain* (pls. 81a, b), Chang suffused the silk with ink to depict a dramatic nighttime scene of four dragons, the mythical rainmakers, creating a tidal wave in an electric storm. The Southern Sung scholar Lo Yüan (1136–1184), writing from ancient traditions, gave this lively account of the dragon: "When it is about to rain, dragons sing out, making sounds like the beating of bronze basins. Their saliva can exude different fragrances, and their breath forms clouds, which they use to conceal their bodies so that they cannot be seen."[46]

The painting of dragons has always been associated with magical powers that could invoke a real dragon. In the *Five Hundred Lohans*, which represents familiar dragon lore, dragons are pictured in various scenes. One such scene shows a dragon having its eyes put in by a lohan (fig. 155), a reference to the legend of the magic painter who, in a final flourish, laid in the dragon's eyes, thus enabling it to come to life and fly away.[47]



Fig. 156. Ch'en Jung (active ca. 1235–62). *Nine Dragons*, dated 1244. Detail. Handscroll, ink and touch of red pigment on paper, 18¼ x 431⅞ in. (46.3 x 1096.4 cm). Francis Gardner Curtis Fund, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (17.1697)

Chang Yü-ts'ai's powerful dragons are composite creatures, with heads of oxen, horns of deer, four-clawed feet that spark with electric currents, and the long bodies and tails of serpents covered with fish scales. In the painting, they seem to permeate, and dissolve in, the atmosphere. Such paintings no doubt contributed to Chang's image as a spiritual leader with great magical powers. Chang's dragons are closely related to the celebrated *Nine Dragons* image of 1244 (fig. 156), a handscroll by Ch'en Jung (active ca. 1235–62), which bears a colophon by Chang's son the thirty-ninth Taoist Celestial Master. Serving as a magistrate at Dragon-Tiger Mountain, Ch'en painted dragons in the tradition of the eccentric untrammeled painters. A description of Ch'en by the fourteenth-century author Hsia Wen-yen says he "makes clouds by splashing ink, creates vapor by spraying water, and, while drunk and shouting loudly, takes off his cap, soaks it in ink, and smears and rubs with it before finishing the painting with a brush."[48]

Another painting that reflects popular folk belief is the handscroll *The Demon-Queller Chung K'uei Giving His Sister Away in Marriage* (pls. 82a, b), by Yen Keng (active ca. 1300).[49] Chung K'uei, a folk hero during the T'ang dynasty, was deified as a protector against demons.[50] He was, according to legend, a man of exceptional martial abilities who, having failed the military examination, committed suicide in order to serve the emperor in death by pro-



tecting him from demons. During the Sung period, portraits of Chung K'uei were distributed on New Year's Eve among high court officials, and street carnivals, led by imperial palace guards, were staged to reenact legends about Chung K'uei and the marriage of his sister.[51]

The Demon-Queller Chung K'uei depicts the wedding march of Chung K'uei's sister as a procession of demons performing acrobatic feats and martial arts dance to the accompaniment of a gong and drum. The athletic figures are drawn with vivid realism and humor. One figure skips and dances with a huge chopper, another with a long spear; a muscular weight lifter balances an enormous rock in one hand; another figure spins a huge jar in the air; others box with one another or carry furniture and other belongings for the bride. At the left end of the scroll (pl. 82a), the bride appears riding a water buffalo, followed by Chung K'uei, hopelessly inebriated from the wedding feast and supported by three demons.

A very similar work, both in subject and style, is *Chung K'uei's Excursion on the Night of the Lantern Festival* (fig. 157), now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, by the professional painter Yen Hui, perhaps a brother of Yen Keng.[52] Several figures in the Cleveland painting are repeated in the Metropolitan scroll, which indicates that the two works, products of the same painting studio, shared the use of the same stencils. A comparison between the music-making groups in the two scrolls (pl. 82a and fig. 158) shows how different figural groupings could be created from single-figure stencil patterns.

Both the Metropolitan and the Cleveland scrolls are popular genre paintings by professional artisans, depicting Chung K'uei as a comic character, no doubt as he would have been portrayed in street carnivals and theatrical reen-

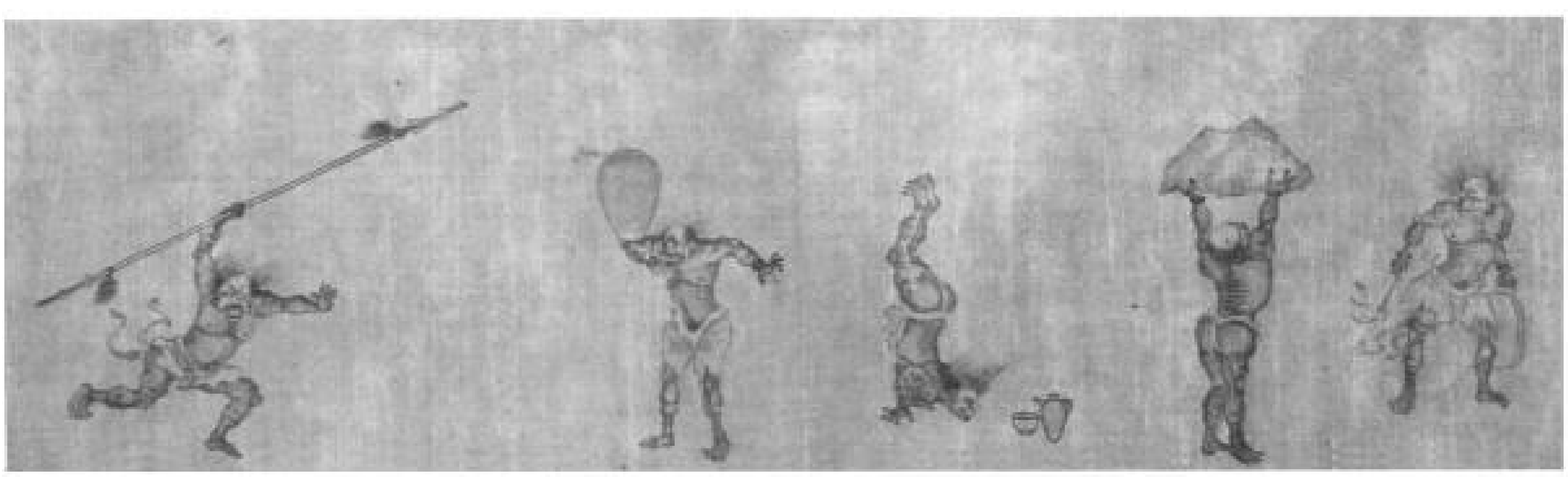
Pl. 82a. Yen Keng (active ca. 1300). *The Demon-Queller Chung K'uei Giving His Sister Away in Marriage.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 9¾ x 99¾ in. (24.4 x 253.4 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift and Rogers Fund, 1990 (1990.134)

Overleaf
Pl. 82b. Detail from *The Demon-Queller Chung K'uei Giving His Sister Away in Marriage*



Fig. 157. Yen Hui (active late 13th–early 14th century). *Chung K'uei's Excursion on the Night of the Lantern Festival.* Handscroll, ink on silk, 9¾ x 94⅝ in. (24.8 x 240.3 cm). Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund, The Cleveland Museum of Art (61.206)

actments at temple festivals. Confucian scholar-artists, on the other hand, who regarded their work as expressions of moral and didactic teaching, rejected the intrusion in painting of earthy realism and street humor. Kung K'ai (1222–ca. 1304), a late Southern Sung and early Yüan scholar-artist, in his painting *Chung K'uei's Excursion* (fig. 159), for example, complains, in a colophon, about an "uncouth" painter who has depicted "the Whiskered One [Chung K'uei] in a field privy being approached by a huge hog, with his dishevelled sister, stick in hand, driving the beast away." Kung adds that in his own painting, he wishes to "wash away . . . such uncouthness, so as not to spoil the pure joy of the brush and the ink."[33] Here, the artist displays carefully executed calligraphic brushstrokes, and the intent of the painting, as made clear by his own inscription and the colophons that follow it, is highly moral and symbolic.[34]



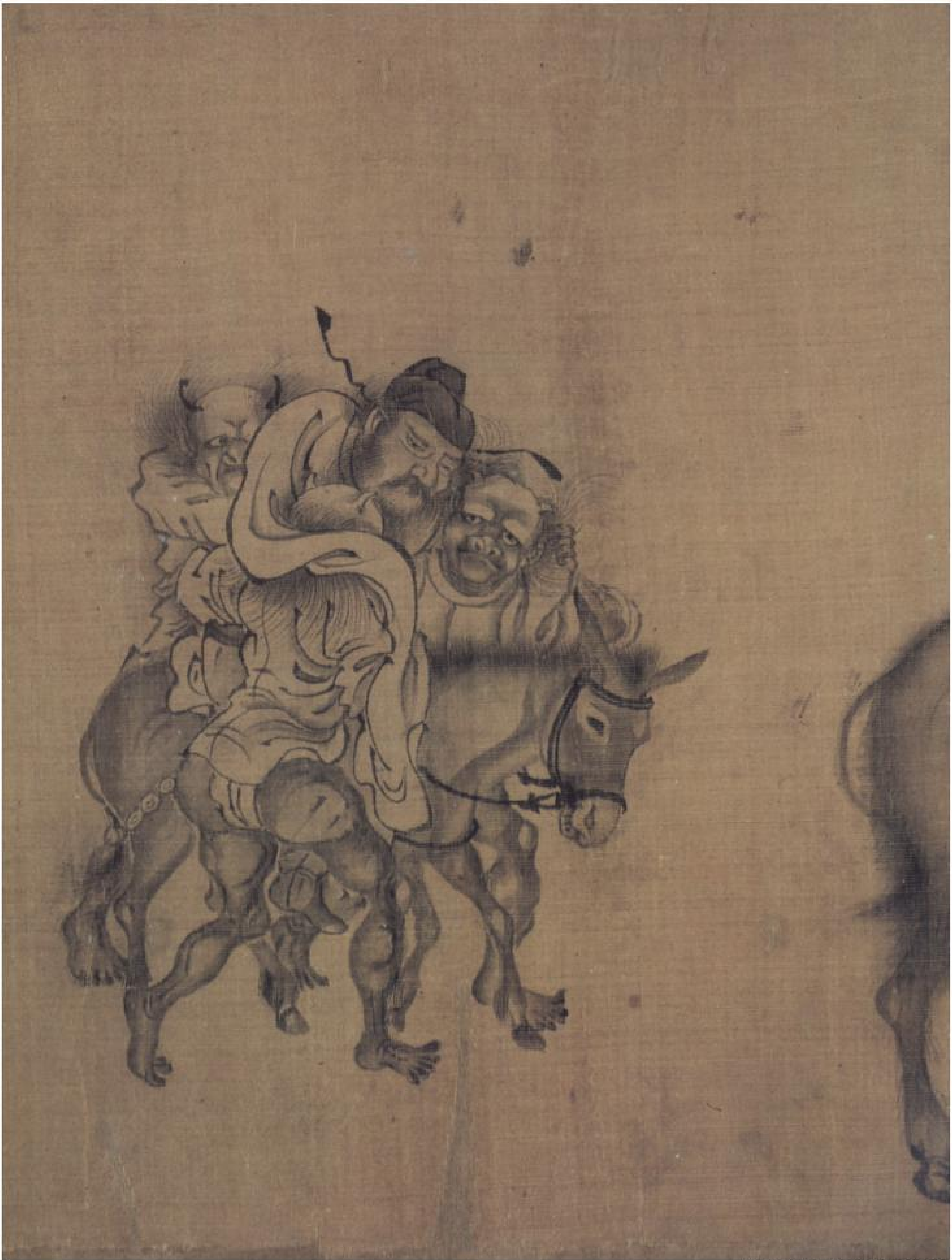








Fig. 158. Detail from *Chung K'uei's Excursion on the Night of the Lantern Festival* (see also fig. 157)

Fig. 159. Kung K'ai (1222–1307). *Chung K'uei's Excursion.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 12$^{15}/_{16}$ x 66¾ in. (32.8 x 169.5 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (38.4)



Pl. 82c. Detail from *The Demon-Queller Chung K'uei Giving His Sister Away in Marriage*

1. In his study of dedicatory inscriptions in the Buddhist caves at Lung-men, Honan Province, Tsukamoto Zenryū argues persuasively that the center of Buddhist worship at Lung-men after the beginning of the sixth century shifted steadily from Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, to Maitreya, the future Buddha, and then to Amitabha and Avalokitesvara (Kuan-yin, in Chinese), the Buddha and the principal bodhisattva of the Pure Land paradise. During the Northern Wei dynasty (386–535), the leading deities represented were Sakyamuni and Maitreya; Amitabha and Avalokitesvara played only minor roles. After 650, under the T'ang, Amitabha and Avalokitesvara were predominant. See Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Ryūmon sekkutsu ni arawaretaru Hokugi Bukkyō" (Buddhism Under the Northern Wei Dynasty as Seen in the Cave-Temples at Lung-men), in Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Kanan rakuyō ryūmon sekkutsu no kenkyū* (A Study of the Buddhist Cave-Temples at Lung-men; in Japanese, with an English summary) (Tokyo: Zauho Press, 1941), pp. 223–36.
2. According to Mizuno and Nagahiro (ibid., p. 136), the five-figured grouping appeared first during the Yung-p'ing era (508–11), in the early sixth century. The *Lotus Sutra* illustrates the doctrine of One Vehicle encompassing many Lesser Vehicles (Hinayana) with the parable of the Burning House: A man finds his children trapped in a burning house. To induce them to escape, he promises to give them three carts, a deer cart (the arhat vehicle), a goat cart (the pratyekabuddha vehicle), and a bullock cart (the bodhisattva vehicle). But after the children have rushed out of the house, they are all rewarded with bullock carts, the most desirable of the three. See *The Saddharma-pundarika; or, The Lotus of the True Law*, translated by H. Kern, in F. Max Müller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), vol. 21, pp. 72–82; see also the discussion by Wen C. Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, vol. 3, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1958), pp. 27–30.
3. Hu Shih, in "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China: Its History and Methods," *Philosophy East and West* 3, no. 1 (April 1953), pp. 3–24, sees Ch'an as a reemergence of Taoism with Buddhist trappings. Other modern Chinese scholars have compared Ch'an Buddhism to the European Protestant Reformation movement in the sixteenth century. See Ch'ien Mu, "Tsai-lun Ch'an-tsung yü Li-hsüeh" (Once Again, On the Ch'an Sect and the School of Principles), in *Chung-kuo hsüeh-shu ssu-hsiang-shih lun-ts'ung* (Collection of Essays on Chinese Intellectual History) (Taipei: Tung-ta T'u-shu Kung-ssu, 1978), vol. 4, p. 232; and Yü Yin-shih, *Chung-kuo chin-shih tsung-chiao lun-li yü shang-yeh chin-shen* (Religious Ethic and the Spirit of Mercantilism in Later Chinese History) (Taipei: Lien-ching Ch'u-pan Shih-yeh Kung-ssu, 1987), pp. 17ff. For bibliography in English on Ch'an, see Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 535–37.
4. See Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 288–89, 382–85.
5. For another translation, see Etienne Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakirti (Vimalakirti-nirdesa)*, translated by Sara Boin (London: Pali Text Society, 1976), pp. 202–3.
6. See Aschwin Lippe, "The Religions of Asia," *Apollo* 82 (September 1965), p. 224; and Li Lin-ts'an, *Nan-chao Ta-li-kuo hsin tzu-liao ti tsung-ho yen-chiu* (A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums; in Chinese, with English summary) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982), pp. 18–25.
7. See Emma C. Bunker, "Early Chinese Representations of Vimalakirti," *Artibus Asiae* 30, no. 1 (1968), pp. 48–49; and Judy C. Ho, "The Perpetuation of an Ancient Model," *Archives of Asian Art* 41 (1988), pp. 33–46.
8. Other Vimalakirti representations at Tun-huang, dating from the sixth through the tenth century, are seen in (chronologically) Caves 314, 335, 220, 103, 159, 360, 138, 61, and 98.
9. In a letter dated September 20, 1980, Chang Kuang-pin of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, writes that a detailed record of this painting is given in Wang Shih-chen, *Ch'ih-pei ou-t'an* (Miscellanea at the North of a Pond; preface dated 1691) (Beijing: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1982), *chüan* 15, p. 5.
10. Little is known about Ma Yün-ch'ing, but according to Howard Rogers (in a letter to Alfreda Murck dated April 8, 1984), Ma Yün-ch'ing's more famous brother Ma T'ien-lai (*tzu* Yün-chang) "was said to be 'completely lacking the air of a court scholar' and despite serving as an official, to have associated with eccentrics and to have readily sculpted and painted portraits for people." For Ma T'ien-lai and a third brother, Ma Yün-han, see Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien* (Precious Mirror of Painting; preface dated 1365), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories), vol. 2 (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), *chüan* 4, p. 123.
11. See note 5 above.
12. A favorite subject of the transformation tales preserved in Tun-huang is the story of the Arhat Maudgalyayana (Mu-lien, in Chinese), who journeyed through purgatory in search of his mother. At the urging of the Buddha, Mu-lien initiated the All Souls' Feast (Ullambana; Yü-lan-p'en, in Chinese) for the benefit of all the unfortunate denizens of hell. See

Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially pp. 87–91, 170–90; see also Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 282–83.

13. Called *Fo-shuo Yen-lo-wang shou-chi ssu-chung ni-hsiu-sheng ch'i-chi wang-sheng ching-t'u ching* (Sutra Spoken by the Buddha on the Prophecy of King Yama Concerning the Four Assemblies' Retrospective Feasts of the Seventh on Rebirth to Be Practiced Preparatory to Rebirth in the Pure Land), in *Hsü tsang ching* (*Tripitaka* Continued) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1913), 1/2b/23, vol. 4, pp. 385ff. For the printed text based on a Korean version of 1469, see *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* (The Japanese *Tripitaka* Continued) (reprint, Taipei, 1967), vol. 150, pp. 385–87. The earliest confirmed dating of one of the manuscript copies of the *Ten Kings Sutra* recovered at Tun-huang is 926. See Matsumoto Eiichi, *Tonkōga no kenkyū* (Study of Paintings from Tun-huang) (Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 402–16; and Sakai Tadao, "Jūō shinkō ni kan suru shomondai oyobi Enraō juki-kyō" (Problems Concerning the Cult of the Ten Kings and the Sutra on the Prophecy of King Yama), in *Saitō sensei kokishukuga kinen rombun shū* (Essays Celebrating Mr. Saitō's Seventieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Katanae Shoin, 1937), pp. 611–56.
14. For a recent study on Ti-tsang, see Hayami Tasuku, *Jizō shinkō* (A New Study of Ti-tsang) (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1975).
15. For modern popular illustrations of the Ten Kings, including Taoist manifestations, found in present-day Taiwan, see *Ten Kings of Hades: The Vidor Collection* (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1984).
16. See Lothar Ledderose, "A King of Hell," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen* (Essays on Chinese Painting in Honor of Professor Suzuki Kei's Sixtieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 31–42; and Ledderose, "The Ten Kings and the Bureaucracy of Hell," manuscript copy of a paper read at the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, Cleveland Museum of Art, March 1981.
17. Four more scrolls from this set are in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Kojiro Tomita, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Portfolio of Chinese Paintings in the Museum (Han to Sung Periods)*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), pls. 106–9.
18. The real name of Chin Ch'u-shih, or Chin the Buddhist Layman, is Chin Ta-shou, under whose label appear a number of extant works produced by different artisan painters employed in that workshop. See list under Chin Ta-shou, in James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings: T'ang, Sung, and Yüan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p. 77. As Cahill notes, the painter was mistakenly called Hsi-chin Chü-shih in the catalogue of the Ashikaga Ruling House, *Kundaikan Sōchōki* (Tokyo: Teishitsu Hakubutsukan, 1932), p. 4b.
19. See *Ning-p'o-fu chih* (The Gazetteer of Ning-po; preface dated 1560) (reprint, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Ch'u-pan-she, 1983), vol. 1, *chüan* 16, pp. 97–98.
20.
    1. Far-reaching King of Ch'in (Ch'in-kuang wang).
    2. King of the First River (Ch'u-chiang wang)
    3. King of Sung (Sung-ti wang)
    4. King of the Five Offices (Wu-kuan wang)
    5. King Yama (Yen-lo wang)
    6. King of Transformation (Pien-ch'eng wang)
    7. King of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan wang)
    8. Impartial King (P'ing-teng wang)
    9. King of the Capital (Tu-shih wang)
    10. King of the Cycle of the Five Paths (Wu-tao chuan-lun wang)

    During the Han dynasty, before the appearance of Buddhism in China, Mount T'ai, in Shantung Province, was regarded, in Taoist belief, as the abode of the lord of the underworld, where the gods ruled with an imperial bureaucracy similar to that of the Chinese Empire. The seventh king of Mount T'ai was of Chinese origin; the fifth king, Yama, the second king of the Buddhist river Styx, and the tenth king of the cycle of rebirth were Indian; and the remaining six kings were of mixed indigenous and foreign origins. See Arthur Waley, *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E., Preserved in the Subdepartment of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum and in the Museum of Central Asian Antiquities, Delhi* (London: Trustees of the British Museum and the Government of India, 1931), pp. xxvi–xxvii.
21. The original set of one hundred paintings was taken to Japan in the thirteenth century and deposited at the Jufukuji in Kamakura. Transferred to the Sōunji, in Hakone, by the Hōjō family, which supported that monastery, they were removed to Kyōto by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1590 and presented to the Hōkōji, a temple that he founded. Later the paintings were transferred to the Daitokuji, where six of the scrolls today are known to be seventeenth-century replacements, by Kano Tokuō, of originals that had been lost. See Tomita, *Portfolio of Chinese Paintings*, pp. 12–13, pls. 75–84. In 1894, forty-four paintings from the set were exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Ten of the group were acquired by the museum, and two more were later acquired by the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. See Wen C. Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1956), pp. 130–31.

    All one hundred scrolls in Japan, including

the replacement paintings, are illustrated in Suzuki Kei, comp., *Chūgoku Kaiga sōgō zuroku/Comprehensive Illustrated Catalog of Chinese Paintings*, vol. 4, *Japanese Collections: Temples and Individuals* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983), pp. 14–22, JT 10-001, nos. 1–100. The six seventeenth-century replacements by Kano Tokuō are: nos. 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, and 63. Modern replacements for the ten paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are: nos. 12–19, 25, and 26; and replacements for the two paintings at the Freer Gallery are nos. 20 and 22. There are, in addition, two previously unnoted, earlier replacements, nos. 74 and 98, which are stylistically datable to the Muromachi period, about the time of the monk-painter Minchō (1351–1431). When I had the privilege of examining these paintings in the company of Professor Shimada Shūjirō in 1955–56, twenty of the original scrolls were at the Kyōto National Museum, eighteen at the Nara National Museum, and the remainder at the Daitokuji.

22. See Fong, *Lohans and Bridge to Heaven*, pp. 1–2.
23. See *Ch'in-hsien-chih* (Gazetteer of the City of Ning-po), edited by Tai Mei, Chang Shu, and Tung P'ei (Ning-po, 1877), *chüan* 67, p. 6b.
24. See Fong, *Lohans and Bridge to Heaven*, pp. 27ff.
25. Forty-one inscriptions, in different states of preservation, have been found on the remaining eighty original scrolls in Japan, while both paintings at the Freer Gallery and four of the ten at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, have inscriptions.
26. Of the donors, eleven were from Wan-ling-hsiang, eight from Hsiang-feng-hsiang, and four from Feng-lo-hsiang; seven bore the surname Ku, a large clan still living today near the site of Hsiang-feng-hsiang. Two of the donors were fellow clergy, a monk from the nearby monastery Tsun-chiao-yüan and a nun from P'u-ming-an, a nunnery in Hua-t'ing, Kiangsu Province. The nun, most likely a native of Ning-po, seems to have lost all her family, as she dedicated her offering to her deceased father, brother, and sister. In addition, two other donors were from Kiangsu, a man from Hua-t'ing and a man residing in Ch'ang-chou.
27. The title of one donor was that of a lowly military inspector (*hsün-kuan*). Two other titles were ceremonial (*chiang-shih-lang*, grade 9b), the kind that well-to-do gentry families in Sung times commonly purchased for prestige.
28. For a description of the Taoist "Fifth Seventh service," see *Ten Kings of Hades*, p. 79, which quotes the Ming dynasty novel *Chin-p'ing-mei* (The Golden Lotus), *chüan* 66. See also Shan-hsi-sheng Po-wu-kuan (Shansi Provincial Museum), *Pao-ning-ssu Ming-tai shui-lu-hua* (Ming Buddhist Feast Pictures from the Pao-ning Temple) (Beijing: Wen-wu Ch'u-pan-she, 1985).
29. In describing the wall paintings in the temples of the two capitals, Chang Yen-yüan notes many images drawn by Wu Tao-tzu but colored and finished by "artisans" (*kung-jen*). See Chang, *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties; completed 847), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 3, pp. 39–43.
30. See Fong, *Lohans and Bridge to Heaven*, pp. 6–10.
31. For comments on the relationship between Taoism and the early seventh-century Ox-head school of Ch'an Buddhism, see Tu Wei-ming, "Ch'an in China: A Reflective Interpretation," in *Zen in China, Japan, East Asian Art: Papers of the International Symposium on Zen, Zurich University, 16–18 November 1982*, Swiss Asian Studies; Research Studies, 8 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 15–18.
32. See Hu Shih, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China"; and Tu Wei-ming, "Ch'an in China," p. 19.
33. See Hu Shih, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China"; and see John R. McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in Early Ch'an Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 227–78.
34. See entry no. 38 by James Cahill, in *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in the Collection of John M. Crawford, Jr.*, exhib. cat. (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1962), pp. 94–96.
35. For a full discussion of Kuan-hsiu and his lohan paintings, see Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans," chap. 1, pp. 30–77.
36. See Chapter 2, p. 76; and Shimada Shūjirō, "Ippin gafū ni tsuite," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 161 (1950), pp. 264–90; translated by James F. Cahill, "Concerning the I-p'in Style of Painting," parts 1–3, *Oriental Art* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1961), pp. 66–74; 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1962), pp. 130–37; 10, no. 1 (Spring 1964), pp. 19–26.
37. *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*, compiled by Tao-yüan and edited by Yang I, *chüan* 14/2076, p. 312. See Yonezawa Yoshiho, "Enkei Kōmon san Yakusan Riō zen-e-zu" (*Ch'an Meeting Between Yao-san and Li Ao* with Encomium by Yen-ch'i Kuang-wen), *Kokka*, no. 859 (October 1963), p. 20; and Yoshiaki Shimizu, "Six Narrative Paintings by Yin T'o-lo: Their Symbolic Content," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980), p. 13.
38. See Shimada Shūjirō, "Mōryō-ga" (On the "Mōryōga" Style of Zen Painting), parts 1, 2, *Bijutsu kenkyū*, no. 84 (December 1938), pp. 4–13; no. 86 (February 1939), pp. 8–11.
39. See Ogawa Hiromitsu, "Mokkei—Koten shugi no hen'yō" (Mu-ch'i—Transformation of Classicism), *Bijutsushi ronsō*, no. 4 (1988), pp. 95ff.

40. For early Ch'an life, see Martin Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule: *Ch'ing kuei* and the Shaping of Ch'an Community Life," in Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 5 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 165–84. For an account of the practice of Ch'an in the larger Chinese monasteries just before its demise in Communist China, see Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900–1950*, Harvard East Asian Studies, 26 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).
41. Translated into Chinese by the pilgrim Hsüan-tsang in 654; "Ta-a-lo-han Nan-ti-mi-to-lo so-shuo Fa-chu-chi" (Record of the Duration of the Law, as Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra), in Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (The *Tripitaka* in Chinese) (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–35), vol. 49, no. 2030, pp. 12–14.
42. See Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans," pp. 59ff.
43. See Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 404, 445–47.
44. Teng Ch'un, *Hua-chi* (A Continuation of the History of Painting; preface dated 1167), in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 3, pp. 12–13; see Shimada Shūjirō, "Keynote Speech," in *International Symposium on Art Historical Studies, 5th, 1986, Osaka: The Art of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara—Its Cult-Images and Narrative Portrayals* (Toyonaka: Kokusai Kōryū Bijutsushi Kenkyūkai, 1987), pp. 3–4.
45. Ch'iu Ch'u-chi (1148–1227), the leader of the northern Ch'üan-chen ("Total Truth") sect, for example, was invited in the early 1220s by Chingghis Khan to join him on his journey to Samarkand. In 1276, the year of the Mongol conquest of the Southern Sung capital, Lin-an, Khubilai Khan, as the first Yüan emperor, Shih-tsu (r. 1271–94), summoned the southern Taoist primate, the thirty-sixth Celestial Master of the Cheng-i ("Orthodox Unity") sect, Chang Tsung-yen (d. 1291), to the capital to be honored. See K'o-k'uan Sun, "Yü Chi and Southern Taoism During the Yüan Period," in John D. Langlois, Jr., ed., *China Under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 212–53.
46. See Lo Yüan, *Erh-ya yi* (Encyclopedia of Dragons; dated 1174), in *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (Compendium of Writings of Ancient and Modern Times; 1725) (Shanghai: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1934–35), vol. 64, pp. 290–91. I owe this reference to Professor Michael Nylan, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
47. The story is first told in connection with the Liang dynasty painter Chang Seng-yu (active ca. 500–ca. 550). See Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 7, p. 90.
48. Hsia Wen-yen, *T'u-hui pao-chien*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 2, *chüan* 4, pp. 95–96; see also Hsien-chi Tseng, "A Study of the Nine Dragons Scroll," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 11 (1957), pp. 17–39.
49. Although Yen Keng is not recorded in any of the usual sources, the closeness of this painting to a handscroll in the Cleveland Museum of Art, *Chung K'uei's Excursion on the Night of the Lantern Festival* (see fig. 157) by Yen Hui, suggests that the two works are from the same workshop. Furthermore, the common surname suggests that the two artists may have been brothers.
50. For the legend of Chung K'uei, see Hu Wan-ch'uan, *Chung K'uei shen-hua yü hsiao-shuo chih yen-chiu* (A Study of the Legend and Stories of Chung K'uei) (Taipei: Wen-shih-che Ch'u-pan-she, 1980).
51. See ibid., pp. 14ff.
52. See entry no. 91 by Wai-kam Ho, in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art*, exhib. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 111–12.
53. See Thomas Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, II: Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), no. 35, pp. 142–49. For a transcription of the text of Kung K'ai's colophon, see Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui-k'ao* (Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting; 1682) (reprint of 1921 facsimile, Taipei: Cheng-chung Shu-chü, 1958), vol. 4, *chüan* 15, p. 90.
54. See Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art*, pp. 145ff.



7 *The Yüan Renaissance*

Chingghis Khan's (r. 1206–27) Mongol armies began their conquest of China with the attack on the Hsi-Hsia kingdom in northwest China between 1205 and 1209. After destroying the Jurchen Chin's northern capital, Yen-ching (modern Beijing), in 1215, Chingghis Khan turned west in 1219, overrunning the Turkish Empire of Khwarizm (Turkistan) in 1220 and establishing the basis of a vast Eurasian empire by the time he died in 1227 while he was completing the conquest of the Hsi-Hsia. In 1234 the eastern Mongol army, aided by the Chinese, captured Pien-ching and destroyed the Chin. Chingghis Khan's grandson Khubilai Khan (1215–1294), who became the Great Khan in 1260, adopted the Chinese dynastic title Yüan (meaning "the beginning") in 1271, and in that year began his southern conquest. Taking the Southern Sung capital, Lin-an, in 1276, Khubilai Khan, as the first Yüan emperor, Shih-tsu (r. 1271–94), finally destroyed the Southern Sung in 1279, becoming the first nomad conqueror to rule all of China.

Although the Mongol rulers made conciliatory gestures toward Confucianism by restoring Confucian temples and exempting Confucian scholars from taxation, they did not have a tradition of recruiting scholarly talent through the state examination system.[1] Particularly suspicious of the southern Chinese, the Mongols ruled through the Central Asians, the Jurchen, and the northern Chinese. As a result, the scholars in the south, now a disenfranchised class, became artists and men of letters if they were independently self-sustaining or took up jobs as teachers, clerks, scribes, geomancers, and so forth. The reunification of north and south not only brought together different regional styles but also stimulated the revival of earlier Northern Sung traditions long neglected or forgotten in the south, and in the great urban centers lovers of antiquities gathered to collect, study, and practice calligraphy and painting. Thus, while their political fortunes suffered, Yüan scholars led a renaissance of the arts.

By the early Yüan period, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Chinese painting had entered its richest and most diverse stage of development. While figurative imagery continued to dominate Buddhist and Taoist art, a great variety of other subjects — among them landscape, architecture, flowers, birds, fish, insects, bamboo, orchids, and plum trees — also flourished, sometimes as specialties of regional schools or studios. Although the imperial Painting Academy was discontinued under the Yüan, leaving government bureaus in charge of professional religious and portrait painters, who were treated as common craftsmen, some Mongol rulers, most notably Jen-tsung (r. 1311–20) and Wen-tsung (r. 1328–32), were actively involved in the arts. And Princess

Unidentified artist (ca. 1300). Detail from *Lotus and Water Birds* (pls. 84a, b)



Sengge (ca. 1283–1331), a sister of Emperors Wu-tsung (r. 1307–11) and Jen-tsung, was a great patron of the arts and a collector of rare works of painting and calligraphy.[2]

Pl. 83. Chou Tung-ch'ing (active late 13th century). *The Pleasures of Fishes*, dated 1291. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 12⅛ x 233¾ in. (30.8 x 593.7 cm). From the Collection of A. W. Bahr, Purchase, Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.18.10)

Genres and Styles in Yüan Painting

The Pleasures of Fishes (pl. 83), by Chou Tung-ch'ing (active late 13th century), a Sung loyalist and a native of Lin-chiang, Kiangsi Province, who lived not far from the Taoist center on Dragon-Tiger Mountain, continues in the tradition of Sung Academy realism of Hui-tsung (pl. 22) and Chao K'o-hsiung (pl. 23). The painting, dated 1291, was inspired by a passage from the fourth-century B.C. Taoist classic *Chuang-tzu.* In one episode, Chuang-tzu, strolling along a bridge, observes, "See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! That's what fish really enjoy!" Whereupon his companion, Hui-tzu, remarks, "You are not a fish, how do you know what fish enjoy?" To which Chuang-tzu replies, "You are not I, so how do you know I don't know what fish enjoy? . . . [But] let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me *how* I know what fish enjoy—so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao."[3] At the end of the scroll, the artist wrote the following inscription:

> Not being fish, how do we know their happiness?
> We can only take an idea and make it into a painting.
> To probe the subtleties of the ordinary,
> We must describe the indescribable.



Overleaf
Pl. 83a. Detail from *The Pleasures of Fishes*

Living under alien rule, Sung loyalists felt like fish out of water. The pleasures taken by fish in water thus held for them an "indescribable" feeling.

A work of breathtaking beauty, the long handscroll on paper shows a variety of grass carps, minnows, and shrimp swimming among aquatic plants in pale translucent colors. Although basing his images on schematic formulas, the artist captured a sense of spontaneity and freedom of movement that reflects a sympathetic understanding of water life indicative of a lifetime of patient study and daily practice. As a "painting from life" (*hsieh-sheng*), this work of magic realism from the early Yüan period reaches a moment of perfection after which no improvement was possible.

Lotus and Water Birds (pls. 84a, b), a pair of hanging scrolls on silk datable to about 1300, are decorative works by a professional painter of the P'i-ling school, which takes its name from the historical designation for Ch'ang-chou (modern Wu-chin), Kiangsu Province, where the school was situated.[4] The midsummer scene (pl. 84a) shows lotus flowers in early stages of budding and bloom. Leaves in lush malachite and blossoms in rich rose hues are massed on the right, with rush, or cattail, inclining to the left. The watery world is enlivened by a pair of ducks skimming the water for food and a turtle paddling away at the lower right; water lilies and grasses float just beneath the surface. The autumn scene (pl. 84b) shows the lotus in later stages, its pods gone to seed, with smartweed and golden water plant. The withered leaves are colored in dusky shades of brown and dark green. At the right, two egrets rest quietly.[5]

Imported from India, the lotus—growing from the slime of a pond, its



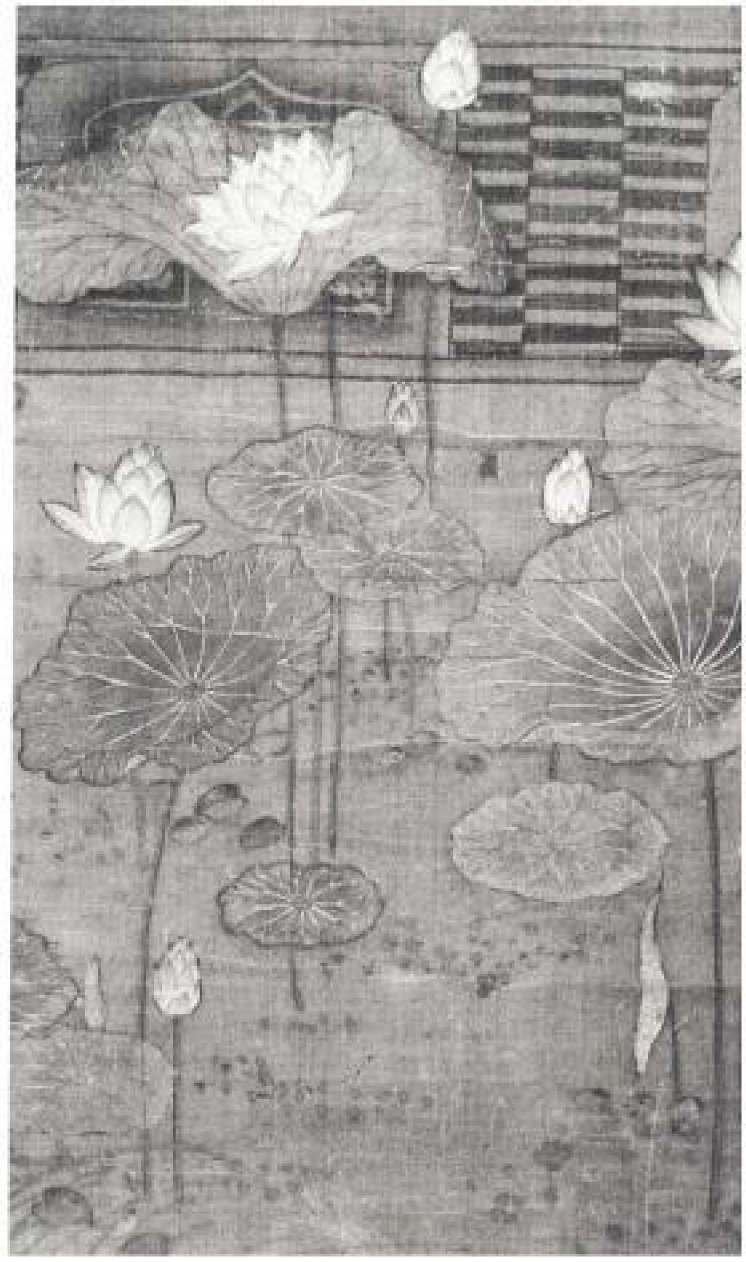




Pls. 84a (right), b (left). Unidentified artist (ca. 1300). *Lotus and Water Birds.* Pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, 54⅝ x 25⁵⁄₁₆ in. (138.7 x 66.9 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1988 (1988.155)







blossoms blooming unsullied—was linked to Buddhist images of purity and rebirth. Lotuses first appeared in Buddhist paintings of paradise. Two such examples are lohan paintings by two Southern Sung artists, Chou Chi-ch'ang and Lu Hsin-chung: one, dated 1178, shows sinners being saved by the lohans, who transform a caldron of boiling water into a cool lotus pond (fig. 160); the other, datable to before 1278, shows the lohan Vanavasi meditating by a lotus pond (fig. 161). In the twelfth-century example the lotuses are depicted naturalistically, with their blossoms and leaves turning three-dimensionally in space; in the late thirteenth-century painting, the drawing of lotus leaves and flowers becomes stylized and patterned.

Lotus Pond and Waterfowl (fig. 162), a pair of scrolls that bear the seal of the artisan painter Yü Tzu-ming of the P'i-ling school, may be dated to the middle of the thirteenth century.[6] Compared with these paintings, *Lotus and Water Birds* (pls. 84a, b) has more linear pattern than movement in depth, a characteristic shared by another pair of scrolls, *Lotus Pond and Waterfowl* (fig. 163), which have been dated to the early fourteenth century.

Fig. 160. Chou Chi-ch'ang (active late 12th century). *Lohans Saving Souls in Hell*, from *Five Hundred Lohans*, set of 100 paintings, datable to 1178–88. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44½ x 21 in. (112.8 x 53.4 cm). Daitoku-ji, Kyoto

Fig. 161. Lu Hsin-chung (active 13th century). *Vanavasi, the Fourteenth Lohan, Viewing a Lotus Pond*, datable to before 1278. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Shōkoku-ji, Kyoto



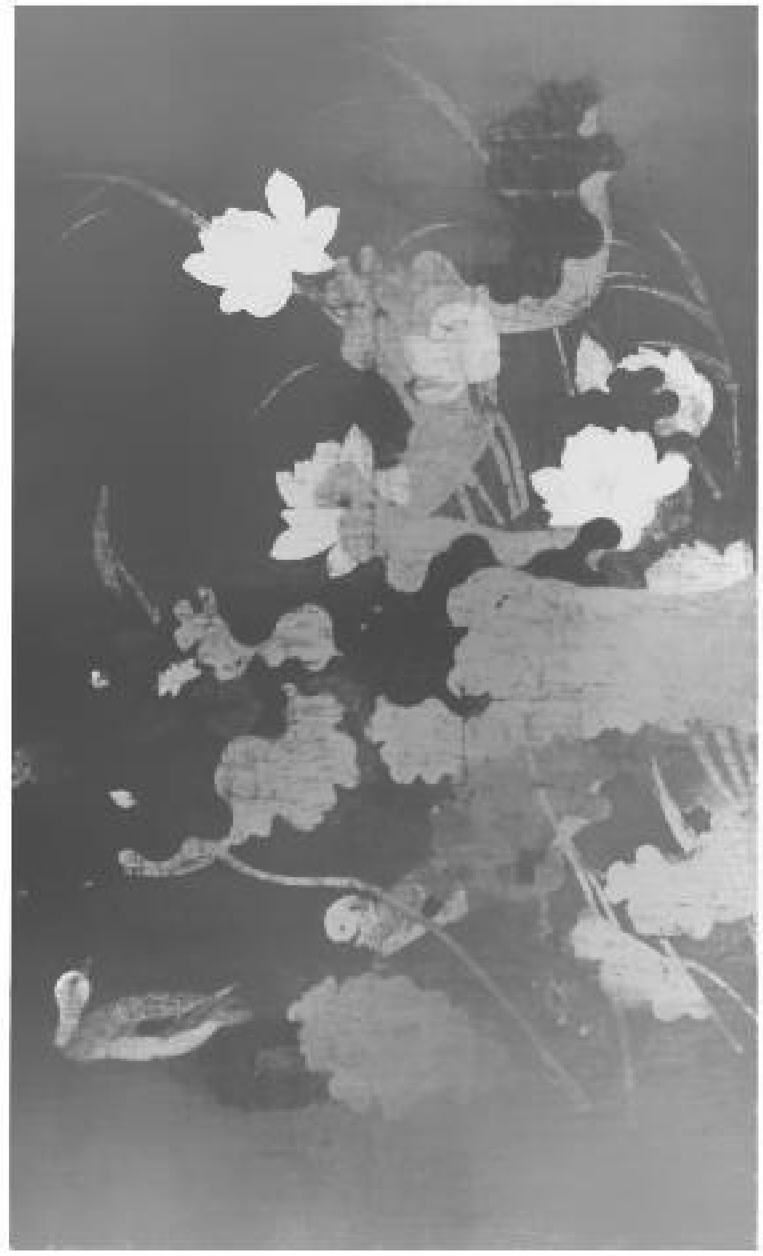


Fig. 162. Yü Tzu-ming (mid-13th century). *Lotus Pond and Waterfowl.* One of a pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, 48 3/8 x 29 1/2 in. (123 x 75 cm). Chionin, Kyoto

Fig. 163. Unidentified artist (early 14th century). *Lotus Pond and Waterfowl.* One of a pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, 59 1/8 x 35 3/4 in. (150.3 x 90.9 cm). Tokyo National Museum

Another decorative work of the P'i-ling school is *Flowers* (pl. 85), attributed to the late fourteenth-century painter Lü Ching-fu.[7] The vertical composition on silk, one of a matching pair, shows butterflies and a mantis flying amid a late spring bouquet of poppies, aster, Chinese pink, and chrysanthemum; a salamander at center foreground is flanked by an orchid on the left and a cabbage on the right. The flowers and insects are flawlessly executed in fine, precise brushwork and colored in delicate hues of pink, white, green, and purple, with malachite and powder-white highlights.

Similar floral and insect motifs are also found in decorative arts of the period. In blue-and-white ceramics decoration done in underglaze cobalt (fig. 164), first produced in the early fourteenth century, floral elements appear with frogs, salamanders, praying mantises, and cicadas.[8] The salamander, when shown with a mantis devouring a cicada to symbolize cyclical predation in nature, echoes a famous passage from the *Chuang-tzu*: "Creatures are so enmeshed in nature, one species always preying on another."[9] The popularity of such motifs in fourteenth-century art seems to reflect the political climate



Pl. 85. Attributed to Lü Ching-fu (active late 14th century). *Flowers.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 40 x 20⅞ in. (101.6 x 53 cm). Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.37.134)



Fig. 164. Double-gourd-shaped vase, mid-14th century. Detail. Porcelain painted in underglaze blue, height 23⅝ in. (60 cm). Topkapi Sarayi Müzesi, Istanbul

of the time, when China, ruled by the Mongols, was beset by repression and injustice.

One of the most important subjects in Yüan painting was the bamboo, which, as one of the three friends of the wintry season, was especially favored by scholar-amateur painters. *Bamboo and Rocks* (pl. 86), by Li K'an (1245–1320), a two-panel silk screen dated 1318, not only reflects the characteristically Chinese interest in botany and scientific detail but also shows the extent to which early Yüan scholar-amateurs were disciplined in the craft of painting.

Li K'an, an artist from Chi-ch'iu, Hopei Province, was among the few early Confucian scholars to attain a high court position under the Mongols.[10] Having specialized in astrology and calendrical studies, Li, at age twenty-three, was appointed assistant ritual officer of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. After the fall of Lin-an in 1276, the art treasures of the Chin and Sung imperial households were taken to the Yüan imperial library in the new Yüan capital, Ta-tu (modern Beijing), and there Li was able to see many masterpieces. One of these was an ink bamboo painting by the Chin scholar-artist Wang T'ing-yün (1151–1202), which inspired Li to become a bamboo painter. In about 1287, the well-known calligrapher Hsien-yü Shu (ca. 1257–1302) advised Li to paint bamboo in natural colors rather than in ink, so that they would look not only refined but real. In 1294, Li was sent by the new emperor, Ch'eng-tsung (r. 1294–1307), on a mission to Annam (Indochina), and there, in wild bamboo country, he began to examine strange species, classifying a great number by analyzing their similarities and differentiating their special features. After


延祐戊午冬季息齋道人筆



Fig. 165. Li K'an (1245–1320). *Ink Bamboo*, datable to 1308. Handscroll, ink on paper, 14¾ x 93½ in. (37.5 x 237.5 cm). Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (48–16)

returning to Ta-tu, Li compiled the *Treatise on Bamboo* (preface dated 1299), which came to be the definitive source on bamboo and bamboo painting.[11]

In *Ink Bamboo* (fig. 165), part of a handscroll datable to 1308, Li K'an creates a profusion of clustered bamboo stalks and leaves with lucid, firm single brushstrokes. In the *Treatise on Bamboo*, Li writes of understanding the nature of bamboo in order to paint it:

> To paint bamboo, one must "hold the complete bamboo plant in one's heart." Grasping the brush and carefully surveying the silk, the painter sees what he wants to paint, then quickly moves the brush to catch what he sees. . . . If the heart knows what must be done and the hand fails to realize it, the fault lies with a lack of training. . . . If a man knows that bamboo must not be rendered merely section by section and leaf by leaf but denies that the complete bamboo plant in his heart comes only with training, he is like a person who dreams of rising to high places but fails to take the necessary steps.[12]

Li's *Bamboo and Rocks* is dated 1318 and executed in a fine outline technique, with leaves and stalks in a washed green touched with malachite highlights. Like Chao Meng-chien's *Narcissus* (pl. 68), it is almost a botanical treatise, in which the bamboo is shown in various stages of growth: "A bamboo is born complete with all its parts—from leaves the size of a cicada chrysalis or a single snakeskin scale, it grows giant stalks a hundred feet long."[13] Standing tall, noble yet reverential, the bamboo symbolizes the gentlemanly virtues of humility and uprightness.

A companion subject to that of bamboo is the flowering plum, another of the three wintry friends. The late Northern Sung Ch'an Buddhist monk-painter Chung-jen (died 1123), from Kuei-chi, a contemporary and friend of Su Shih and Huang T'ing-chien, originated the tradition of ink plum painting that was later firmly established by the Southern Sung scholar-amateur Yang Wu-chiu (1097–1169), a native of Kiangsi Province.[14] In contrast to the Southern Sung Academy painting of the flowering plum by Ma Lin (fig. 104), which

Pl. 86. Li K'an (1245–1320). *Bamboo and Rocks*, dated 1318. Pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, each scroll 74¾ x 21¾ in. (189.9 x 55.2 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.7)



Pl. 87. Wang Mien (1287–1359). *Fragrant Snow at Broken Bridge.* Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 44⅝ x 19⅝ in. (113.2 x 49.8 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.9)



Fig. 166. Yang Wu-chiu (1097–1169). *Four Views of the Flowering Plum*, dated 1165. Handscroll, ink on paper, 14⅝ x 141¼ in. (37.2 x 358.8 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

depicts the flower with fine outline drawing and color, Yang's *Four Views of the Flowering Plum* (fig. 166), dated 1165, shows the plum rendered in ink in a calligraphic image based on a set of conventionalized brush formulas.

Fragrant Snow at Broken Bridge (pl. 87), a small hanging scroll on silk by Wang Mien (1287–1359), exemplifies Yüan dynasty ink plum painting at its best. The composition, which follows a formula found in the fourteenth-century ink plum manual by Wu T'ai-su (ca. 1351; fig. 167),[11] shows a splendid old branch of plum laden with flowers pendant from the top of the scroll. The plum tree is rendered in different calligraphic brushstrokes: the snow-covered boughs in rough "flying white" strokes, with streaks of white showing through a split brush; the curving branches in sweeping saberlike strokes; and the delicate blossoms and scattering petals in sharp outline strokes. Wang Mien stains the silk surface with a light ink wash, so that the snowy branches and silken blossoms stand out dramatically as in a moonlit scene. In the upper left is a poem composed and inscribed by the artist:

> A plum tree in winter, with branches of white jade,
> Stirred by a warm breeze, its scattering petals flutter like snowflakes.
> In his heart, the Recluse of the Lonely Hill [Lin Pu, 967–1028] remains true to himself,
> But someone has just passed the Broken Bridge, carrying with him the song of reed pipes.

Born in Chu-chi, Chekiang Province, to a poor family, Wang Mien, although a brilliant scholar, failed the *chin-shih* examination, which resulted in



his turning his attention to the study of martial arts and military strategy.[16] In 1347, he went to Ta-tu in search of a career. A year later, predicting political chaos, he returned home, retiring to the Chiu-li Mountain with his aging mother, and became a recluse. In 1359, he is said to have been named an adviser to the future first Ming emperor, Chu Yüan-chang (r. 1368–98); he died soon after. A tall, impressive figure with a bristling beard and a colorful personality, he served as the model for the prototypical scholar in the famous eighteenth-century Ch'ing dynasty novel *The Scholars*, by Wu Ching-tzu. The story tells of a virtuous scholar whose romantic image of himself as a knight-errant was sadly out of place in the regimented world of late imperial China.[17] In *Fragrant Snow at Broken Bridge*, the plum branch is a symbol of Wang Mien himself. The recluse, upon hearing the worldly "song of reed pipes" across Broken Bridge, is stirred by the "warm breeze" of growing rebellion against the Mongols in the late 1350s. In the painting a forceful vitality, released



Fig. 167. Wu T'ai-su (14th century). *Pine Studio Plum Manual*, ca. 1351. Early 16th-century manuscript copy, 8⅜ x 7⅛ in. (21.3 x 18 cm). Hiroshima Municipal Library

Pl. 87a. Detail, pl. 87



Pl. 88. After Wang Chen-p'eng (active ca. 1280–1329), 14th century? *Dragon Boat Regatta on Chin-ming Lake.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on silk, 13½ x 212 in. (34.3 x 538.5 cm). Purchase, Bequest of Dorothy Graham Bennett, 1966 (66.174)

through the wildly dancing stamens and fluttering petals, courses through the textured old branch.

Although the Mongol rulers made no attempt to sponsor a Painting Academy as such, they could be generous to their favorite artists. One professional painter who richly benefited from imperial patronage was Wang Chen-p'eng (active ca. 1280–ca. 1329), from Yung-chia, Chekiang, a specialist in fine-style figure and architectural painting. Having served the future emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1311–20) while he was the heir apparent—painting, among other works, *Vimalakirti and the Doctrine of Nonduality* (pl. 73) in 1308—Wang, in 1314, was made registrar (rank 7) at the imperial library. By 1327, he had been promoted (to rank 5) and made supervisor of the water transportation of grain tax between Ch'ang-shu and Chiang-yin, an important and much coveted post.

Dragon Boat Regatta on Chin-ming Lake (pl. 88) is an early copy of a picture by Wang Chen-p'eng painted for Princess Sengge after a composition he had painted for the future emperor Jen-tsung in 1310.[18] At least six other versions of this composition are extant.[19] Traditionally held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, dragon boat races commemorated the death of the ancient



Ch'u minister and poet Ch'ü Yüan, who, despondent over his banishment from the king's court, drowned himself in the Mi-lo River in 278 B.C. Depicted here is a regatta sponsored by the Northern Sung emperor Hui-tsung during the Ch'ung-ning era (1102–6) on Golden Bright Lake, near the imperial palace compound in Pien-ching. At the right, the elaborately decorated dragon boats, their banners and streamers waving in the breeze, are rowed by dozens of oarsmen under the arched bridge that connects the palaces and pavilions to the goal at left, in front of the Tower of the Precious Ferry. A dragon barge with a large towered structure serves as a reviewing stand. In the foreground, acrobats and tumblers perform, while on the terrace of the great pavilion officials gather to witness the awarding of the prize by the emperor.

Wang's architectural, meticulously rendered painting set a new standard. Executed with a pointed brush and a ruler according to guidelines set forth in contemporary architectural manuals, Wang's drawing is totally accurate, and one could, on the basis of the drawing, reconstruct the entire building complex.[20]

The Yellow Pavilion (pl. 89), by Hsia Yung (second half of the 14th century), dating to about 1350, closely follows Wang Chen-p'eng's architectural



Pl. 89. Hsia Yung (active second half of 14th century). *The Yellow Pavilion*, ca. 1350. Album leaf, ink on silk, 8⅛ x 10½ in. (20.7 x 26.8 cm) From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Gift of Jack C. Tang and Oscar L. Tang, 1991 (1991.438.3)

drawing style.[21] A castlelike structure overlooking a river and filled with tourists and diners enjoying the view is depicted in careful detail in ink on silk. Over the horizon above the distant hills, an immortal flies away on the back of a crane. On the painting, in a minute regular script, the artist has inscribed "A Rhapsody on the Yellow Pavilion," an essay by the famous Northern Sung scholar Su Ch'e (1039–1112), a brother of Su Shih.[22]

A professional painter from Ch'ien-t'ang, the former Southern Sung capital, Hsia Yung specialized in painting early Sung architectural sites, especially two popular scenic favorites, the Prince of T'eng Pavilion in Nan-ch'ang, Kiangsi (fig. 168), and the Yüeh-yang Pavilion at Lake Tung-t'ing, Hunan. Tours de force of miniature refinement, Hsia's album-size paintings clearly appealed to the popular taste for virtuoso performance. Similar technical display occurred in later Ming and Ch'ing decorative arts, such as lacquer and embroidery designs and bone carvings. Yet, for all its meticulous detail, *The Yellow Pavilion* (pl. 89a) is anything but static and conventional; indeed, the structure is realistic and volumetric and the scene has an elegant vitality.

Su Ch'e's "Rhapsody on the Yellow Pavilion" had a special significance for Hsia Yung. In 1077, when Su Shih was a prefect at Hsü-chou, in northern Kiangsu, the region was flooded following a sudden break in the dikes of the Yellow River. Su worked indefatigably to prepare for the disaster, and after the



Fig. 168. Hsia Yung (active second half of 14th century). *The Prince of T'eng Pavilion.* Album leaf, ink on silk, 10 7/16 x 10 13/16 in. (26.5 x 27.5 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (15.36h)

Overleaf
Pl. 89a. Detail, pl. 89





flood subsided and the city walls were repaired, the Yellow Pavilion (named for the color of the river mud) was dedicated in his honor on the northeast wall. Three centuries later, in 1344, the Yellow River again flooded its banks, inundating the Huai River region between the lower reaches of the Yellow and the Yangtze rivers. This disaster, followed by drought and famine and locust plagues, led to widespread peasant rebellions against the hated Mongol rule.[23] In the painting, the scenery apparently refers to the legend of the Yellow Crane Pavilion, which tells of an immortal riding into the sunset on the back of a yellow crane. But instead of citing a poem that related to the Yellow Crane Pavilion (which was situated near Wu-ch'ang, Hupei Province, rather than in northern Kiangsi), the painter chose Su Ch'e's rhapsody on the Yellow Pavilion. By referring to a flood that had occurred three centuries earlier—and concealing his real message by writing Su's text in a script so minute that few would actually have read it—Hsia Yung obliquely signaled his awareness of the momentous social changes caused by the flood of the 1340s, which would lead to the downfall of the Yüan dynasty less than twenty years later.

In landscape painting, the early Yüan artist faced wide stylistic choices. *Scholar Viewing Plum Blossoms* (pl. 90), by an unidentified Hangchow painter, dating to about 1300, continues in the ax-cut brushstroke and ink wash idiom of the Southern Sung Academy. The small hanging scroll repeats Ma Yüan's favorite theme of a scholar meditating on the flowering plum tree (pl. 50). The early Yüan painting, however, has lost Ma's vision and purity of style. The composition is cluttered, and the ink-wash technique, now used for realistically modeling rock and tree forms, no longer suggests the vast emptiness of space.

More typically expressive of the ethos of early Yüan is the brooding vision of *Crows and Bare Trees in Winter* (pl. 91), by an unidentified late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century painter. The dominant element of the composition, executed in the dotted idiom of the early Northern Sung master Fan K'uan (active ca. 990–1030; fig. 30), is a continuous receding ground plane, with a flat horizon line cutting across the picture plane; sweeping curves and swirling rhythms echo the fan format. Against a schematic composition, crazed jackdaws circle in a wild frenzy over a still, frozen landscape. The picture came to symbolize China under Mongol occupation, recalling the T'ang poet Tu Fu's patriotic lament:

> The country is shattered,
> But the mountains and the rivers remain![24]

A similar representation is the large hanging scroll *Crows in Wintry Trees* (pl. 92), by Lo Chih-ch'uan (active ca. 1300–1330).[25] A loyalist recluse living in his native Lin-ch'uan, Kiangsi, Lo painted in the Northern Sung idiom of Li Ch'eng and Kuo Hsi, using it as the basis for a new emotional realism in landscape art. The painting shows powerful anthropomorphic trees rising against snow-covered banks, with crows circling overhead. The contorted trees with frozen, spiky branches, the devil-face rocks pushing out from under the snow,



Pl. 90. Unidentified artist (ca. 1300). *Scholar Viewing Plum Blossoms.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 37¼ x 11½ in. (94.7 x 29.2 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1988 (1988.153.2)



the icy water, and the restless, hungry crows squawking against the dark sky—all convey a mood of desolation and gloom. Describing a similar composition attributed to the early Northern Sung master Li Ch'eng (919–967), Lo's contemporary Chao Meng-fu wrote, "The dark forest and piled snow [are] deeply moving; the flock of circling birds seems to cry sadly from hunger and cold."[26]

Li Ch'eng's earlier depiction of travelers in a wintry forest (pl. 9) had great significance for early Yüan painters. Like the unbending old tree symbolizing the virtuous scholar in Li's painting, clustered trees often symbolized a silent gathering of friends in Yüan paintings. The Yüan painters saw, instead of figural representations, enduring old trees as self-portraits. Huddled in the snow near the tree roots are a pair of pheasants, two tiny dots of warm color in the blustery winter scene. Stylistically, the return to the Li Ch'eng idiom also reflects the early Yüan search for a new realism in landscape

Pl. 91. Unidentified artist (late 13th or early 14th century). *Crows and Bare Trees in Winter.* Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and color on silk, diameter 9¾ in. (24.8 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.46)

Pl. 92. Lo Chih-ch'uan (active ca. 1300–1330). *Crows in Wintry Trees.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 51¾ x 31½ in. (131.5 x 80 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.6)







a



b

Fig. 169a. Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256). *Scholar Reclining and Watching Rising Clouds*, dated 1256. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, $9\frac{7}{8}$ x $9\frac{15}{16}$ in. (25.1 x 25.3 cm). John L. Severance Fund, The Cleveland Museum of Art (61.421)

Fig. 169b. Emperor Li-tsung (1205–1264; r. 1224–64). *Poem by Wang Wei*, dated 1256. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, $9\frac{7}{8}$ x $9\frac{13}{16}$ in. (25.1 x 24.9 cm). John L. Severance Fund, The Cleveland Museum of Art (61.422)

Pl. 93. T'ang Ti (1287–1355). *Painting After Wang Wei's Poem*, dated 1323. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, $50\frac{3}{4}$ x $27\frac{1}{4}$ in. (128.9 x 69.2 cm). Gift of Ernest Erickson Foundation, 1985 (1985.214.147)

painting. The early Yüan scholar and Sung loyalist Chao Wen (1238–1315) wrote a poem in which Lo Chih-ch'uan describes his painting:

> Because I use my eyes as my hands,
> All the myriad things of Heaven and earth are my mentors.
> If I am to express their essence,
> First I must capture their appearance, their skin.
> Whether or not a finished painting possesses likeness,
> All men have eyes, so who can deceive them?[27]

Another major exponent of the Li Ch'eng–Kuo Hsi idiom during the fourteenth century was T'ang Ti (1287–1355), from Wu-hsing, Chekiang.[28] A fellow townsman and pupil of Chao Meng-fu, T'ang Ti, though trained as a scholar and poet, entered official service in the capital in the mid-1310s as a court painter, winning praise from Emperor Jen-tsung for his part in the decoration of the Yüan imperial palaces. In the wall paintings of the north, the Li–Kuo tree style had survived from the late Northern Sung period as the preferred representational idiom of the professional painters. In *Painting After Wang Wei's Poem* (pl. 93), dated 1323, T'ang Ti paints a composition after Kuo Hsi, illustrating a famous couplet by the T'ang poet Wang Wei:[29]

> I walk to where the water ends,
> I sit and view the clouds as they rise.[30]

The couplet, listed by Kuo Hsi in his index of poetic subjects suitable for representation in painting, was one of the most widely illustrated T'ang poems in Sung landscape painting.[31] In Ma Lin's *Scholar Reclining and Watching Rising Clouds* (fig. 169a), which is dated 1256 and accompanied by Emperor Li-tsung's transcription of Wang's couplet (fig. 169b), a scholar reclines on the riverbank as he watches and meditates on rising clouds enveloping a distant mountain





Fig. 170. *Pine Trees.* Detail of a wall painting, dated 1358, from the Taoist temple Yung-lo-kung. Ink and color. Jui-ch'eng, Shansi Province

Fig. 171. T'ang Ti (1287–1355). *Fishermen Returning on a Frosty Bank*, dated 1338. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 56¾ x 35¼ in. (144 x 89.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

peak. Like Ma Yüan's *Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight* (pl. 50), Ma Lin's painting draws us into a psychological space by evoking the poetic vision with an abstract language of visual signs.

T'ang Ti, on the other hand, returns to a narrative approach. In his painting the poet is shown sitting on an embankment under towering wintry trees; in the distance, billowing clouds rise over a level-distance view of bleak shoreline, reminiscent of Kuo Hsi's *Old Trees, Level Distance* (pl. 11). In T'ang's image, an attendant, to the right of the trees, carries the scholar's zither, presumably illustrating the act of walking to "where water ends." The literal rendition of the written word, however, adds little to its poetic expression.

Returning Fishermen (pl. 94), dated 1342, is an example of T'ang Ti's monumental wall painting style. A detail from the wall paintings of the Taoist temple Yung-lo-kung in Shansi (fig. 170), dated 1358, shows how the Li–Kuo descriptive landscape idiom was preserved and practiced by the artisan painters of the north. In T'ang Ti's painting, the landscape forms are built with the principal motifs of the earlier style, billowing-cloud rocks and crab-claw branches. Three fishermen return after the day's work, talking animatedly as they approach a narrow bridge to cross a stream (pl. 94a). The great trees and boulders are realistically depicted in a brushwork that, while fluent and sure, never dominates or detracts from the realism of the representation. The

Pl. 94. T'ang Ti (1287–1355). *Returning Fishermen*, dated 1342. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 52¾ x 33$\frac{15}{16}$ in. (134 x 86.2 cm). Purchase, Bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.5)

Overleaf
Pl. 94a. Detail, pl. 94









composition follows that of an earlier version (fig. 171), dated 1338. The figure groups in the two paintings are identical, which suggests the painter's use of a stencil. One can easily understand the Yüan emperor's satisfaction with T'ang's work, for such painting recalls the monumental grandeur of the Northern Sung palace style, while the fishermen returning home, conversing and singing, celebrate the peace and prosperity of a new imperial rule.

After successfully serving as a magistrate in Hsiu-ning, a large and thriving city in southern Anhwei Province, T'ang Ti retired to his native Wu-hsing in 1349. In *The Prince of T'eng Pavilion* (pl. 95), a handscroll on paper dated 1352, T'ang renders a popular scenic site in a style that combines architectural realism with a scholar-painter's calligraphic brushwork. Compared with professional works by Wang Chen-p'eng (pl. 88) and Hsia Yung (pl. 89), which also excel in clarity of minute architectural rendering, T'ang's painting successfully integrates architectural precision with a highly naturalistic Li–Kuo style of landscape, executed in a free calligraphic brushwork.

Pl. 95. T'ang Ti (1287–1355). *The Prince of T'eng Pavilion*, dated 1352. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10¾ x 33¼ in. (27.3 x 84.4 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.36)

The Yüan Renaissance in Calligraphy

The Mongol conquest led to a revival of interest in the establishment of continuity with the past. The dissemination of the imperial collections at the Chin

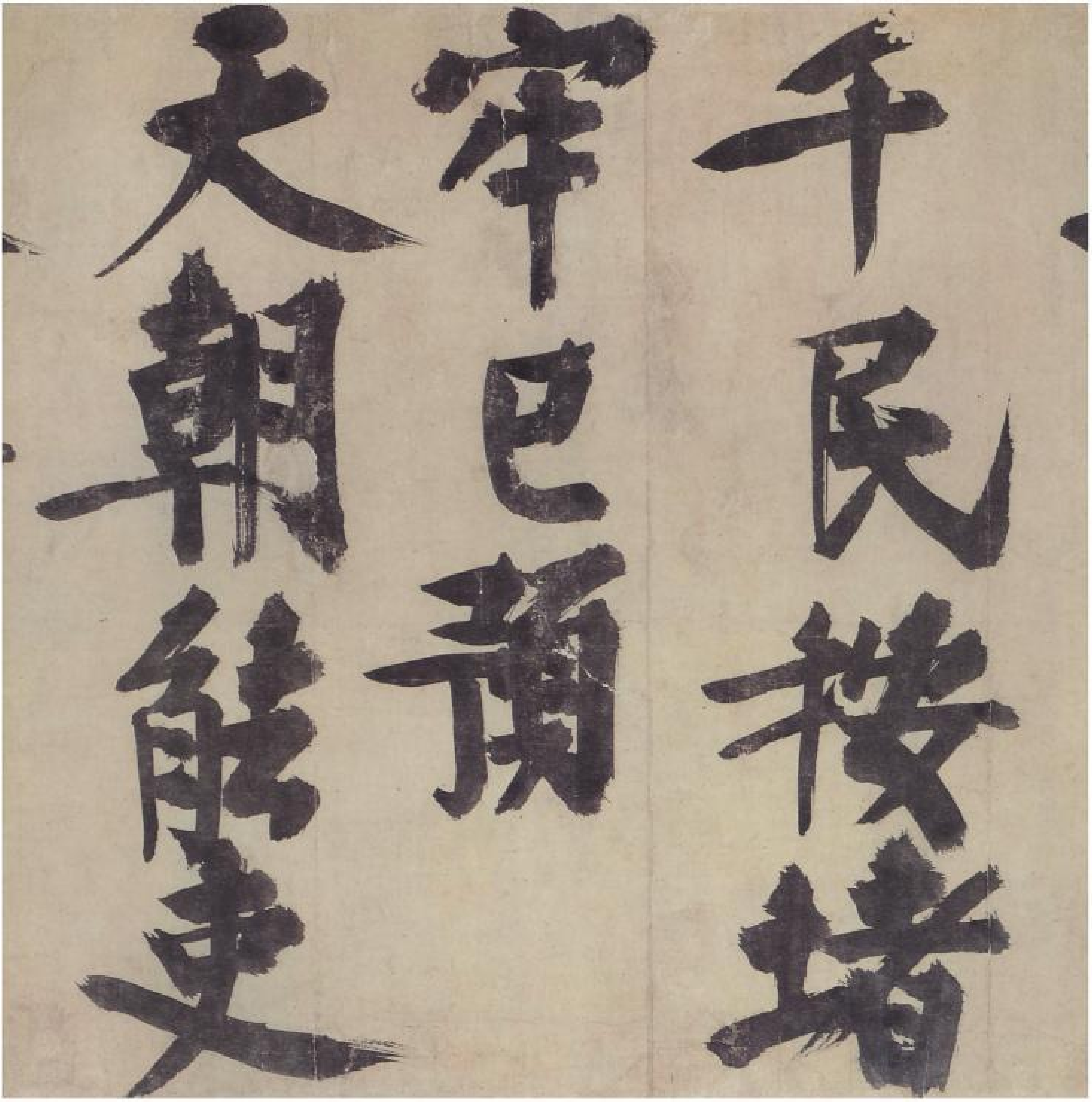


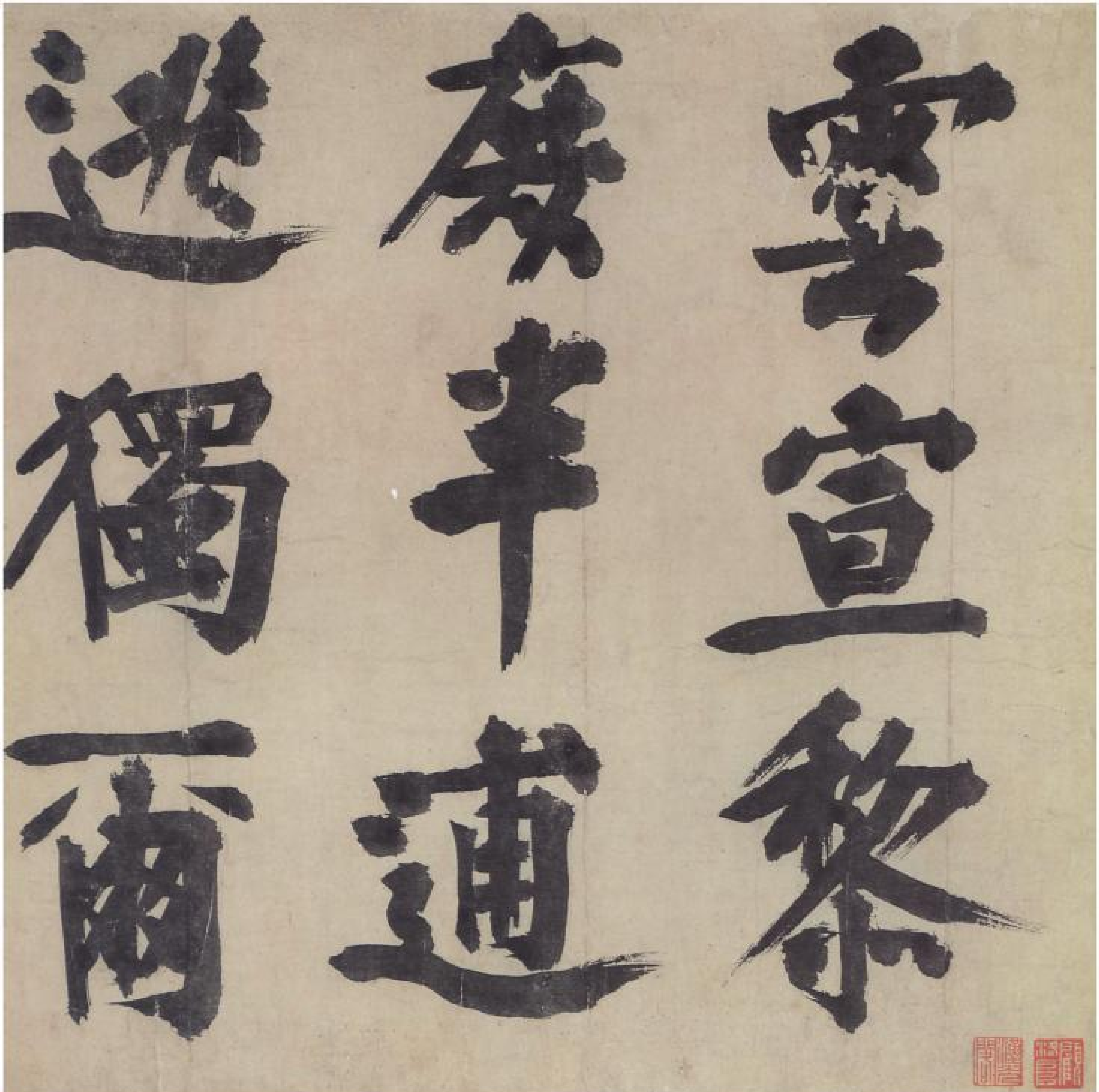
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Pl. 96. Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1190–1244). *Poem of Farewell to Liu Man*, dated 1240. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 14⅜ x 108⅛ in. (36.5 x 274.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.17)

and Southern Sung capitals following the conquest, the former in 1234 and the latter in 1276, made a large number of ancient works of art available to private collectors, which stimulated the study of ancient styles by artists and collectors alike, providing a basis for a renaissance in the arts of calligraphy and painting.

Toward the end of the Southern Sung there had been increasing dissatisfaction with the state of calligraphy. The renowned late Southern Sung calligrapher and narcissus painter Chao Meng-chien (1199–before 1267), for example, complained that Southern Sung calligraphy was weak in structure:

> It is common belief that it is preferable to follow the [Eastern] Tsin [317–420] style than to follow the T'ang [618–906]. Yet how can one follow the Tsin [without first mastering the T'ang]? To follow the T'ang is to learn the basic methods and principles [of calligraphy]. To follow the Tsin without first mastering the T'ang is to misjudge one's own capabilities. If one merely slants the characters, trying to make them attractive but not succeeding, it is like attempting to draw a tiger and ending up with a dog. Why so? In calligraphy every character must rest firmly on a framework of supports and walls; only then will it not look weak and crooked. In Ssu-ling's [Emperor Kao-tsung's] calligraphy, though smooth and fluent, not enough attention is given to the building of supports and walls. This problem should be discussed among the connoisseurs.[11]





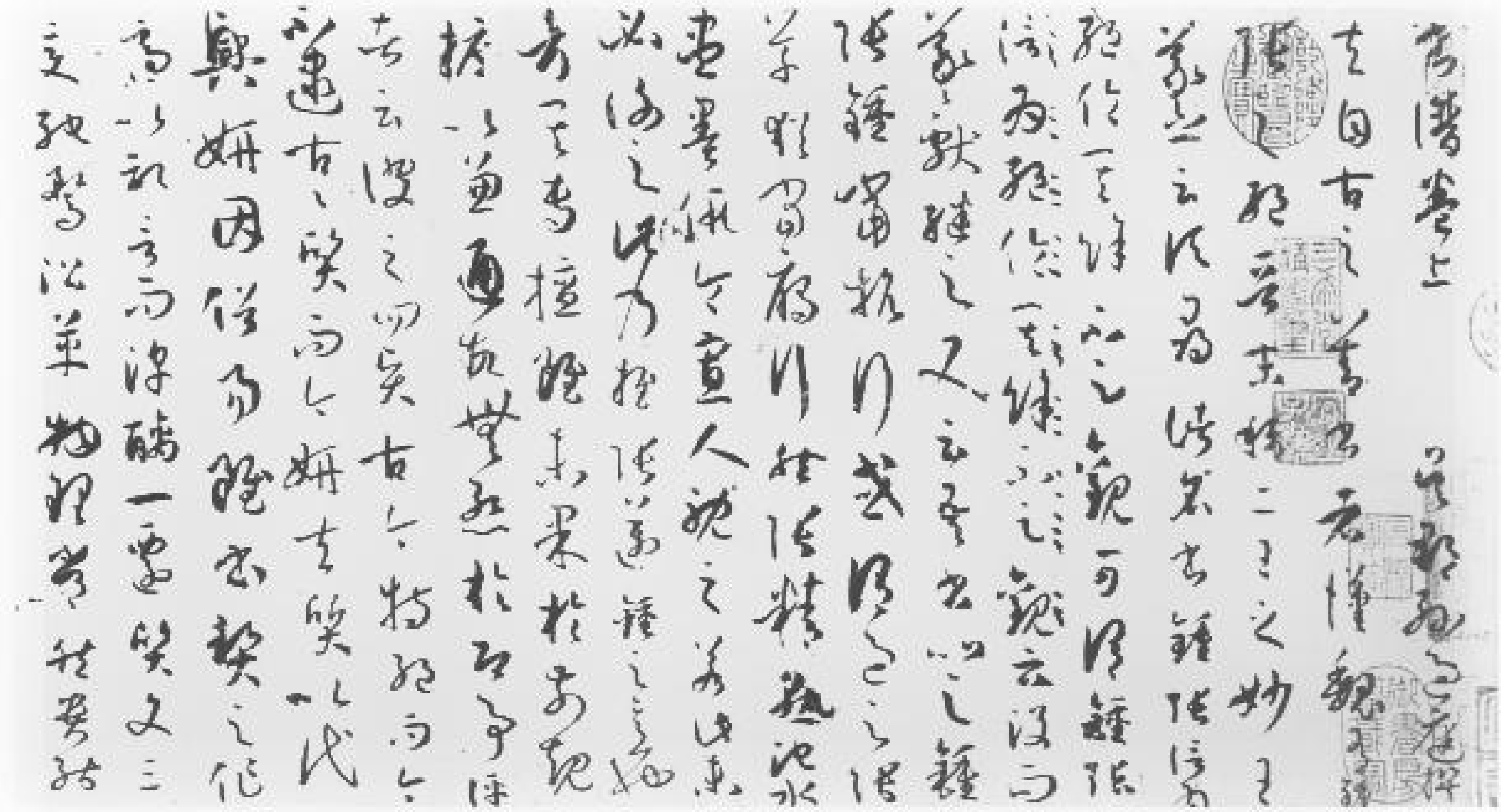


Fig. 172. Sun Kuo-t'ing (648?–703?). *Manual of Calligraphy*, dated 687. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10½ x 354⅝ in. (26.5 x 900.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

This passage by Chao Meng-chien states the terms of the new calligraphic debate. Whereas during the eleventh century, late Northern Sung masters such as Huang T'ing-chien and Mi Fu had invoked Tsin models to promote freer, more individualistic styles, Chao Meng-chien, in the late thirteenth century, now called for a revival of the T'ang standard to restore discipline and structure.

After the fall of the Northern Sung, Chin calligraphers in the north, like their southern counterparts, generally followed the Northern Sung masters, especially Huang T'ing-chien (pl. 18) and Mi Fu (pl. 19). The *Poem of Farewell to Liu Man* (pl. 96), a handscroll by the Yüan statesman Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1190–1244), dated 1240 and his only extant work, is perhaps the finest known example of thirteenth-century northern calligraphy. In 1215, when the Mongols took Yen-ching (modern Beijing), Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, a native of Yen-ching and a descendant of the Khitan prince Tung-tan of Liao, entered the service of Chingghis Khan and in 1231 was appointed prime minister under Chingghis Khan's son Ögödei.[33]

Written in large square characters, each about four inches high, the *Poem of Farewell* sings the praises of the official Liu Man, a local magistrate in northwest Shansi who protected his people during the conquest:

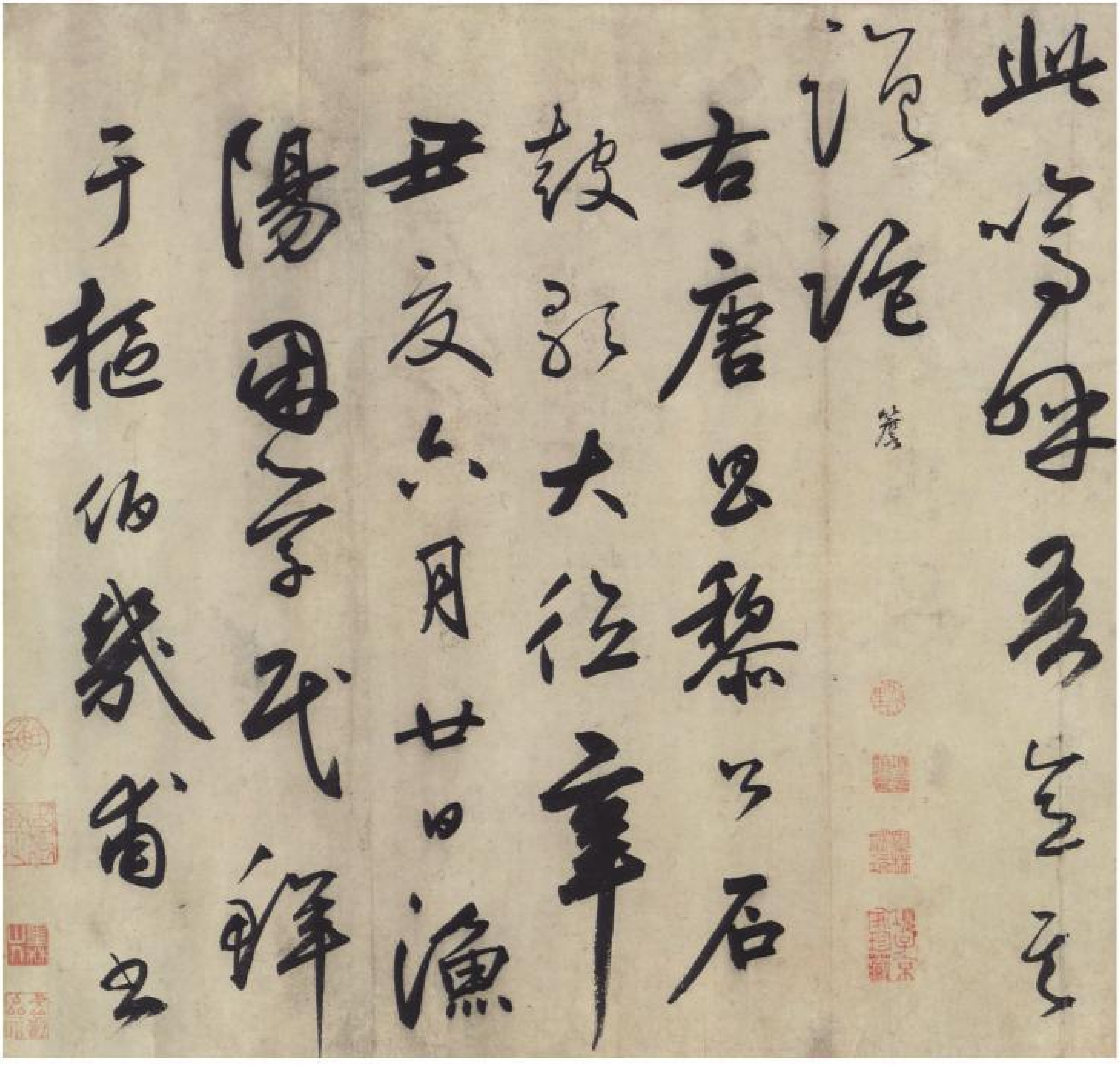
> Half the population of Yün and Hsüan have fled their homes;
> Only the few thousand people under your care are secure.
> You are among our dynasty's most able administrators,
> Your good name stands as tall as Mount T'ai.



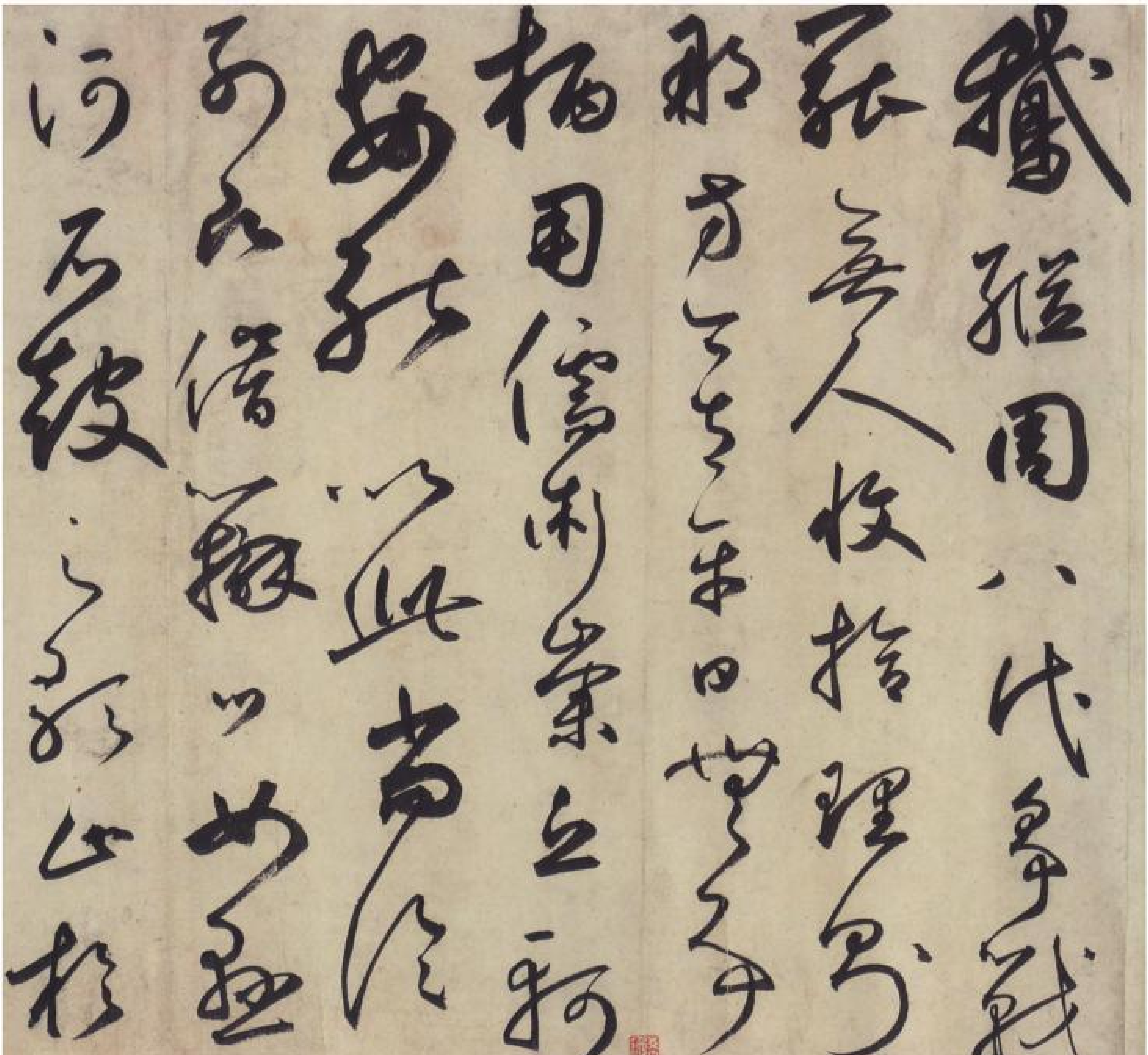
Fig. 173. Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785). *Draft of a Burial Memorial for a Nephew.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 11⅛ x 29¾ in. (28.2 x 75.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

In his calligraphy, Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai follows the traditions of both the T'ang master Yen Chen-ch'ing (709–785; fig. 47) and the late Northern Sung master Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105; fig. 60). In his broad, straightforward brushwork, similar to that of Huang T'ing-chien and done with a rapid movement, Yeh-lü follows Huang's precept of using a simplified brushwork and "driving every stroke with full force."[34] The powerful characters, executed in thick brushstrokes and square compositions, also evoke the heroic style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. Compared with Yen's writing, however, which is highly balanced and controlled, Yeh-lü's style is unadorned and unstructured, reflecting in its bold, blunt manner the generous, unaffected nature of its maker.

The early Yüan calligrapher Hsien-yü Shu (1257?–1302), a northerner from Yü-yang, Hopei, arrived in Hangchow (formerly the Southern Sung capital, Lin-an) in about 1283. There he soon became part of a coterie of prominent scholars and connoisseurs that included the well-known collector Chou Mi and the great scholar-official calligrapher and painter Chao Meng-fu.[35] In Hangchow, Hsien-yü Shu was able to study ancient masterpieces of calligraphy, including two of the most famous: the *Manual of Calligraphy* (fig. 172), a classic of the archaic running-clerical script in the tradition of Wang Hsi-chih by the early T'ang master Sun Kuo-t'ing (648?–703?), and the *Draft of a Burial Memorial for a Nephew* (fig. 173), a superb example of the T'ang dynasty running script by Yen Chen-ch'ing. While Hsien-yü Shu emulated the cursive styles of T'ang masters such as Sun Kuo-t'ing and Yen Chen-ch'ing, he was highly critical of the Northern Sung master Huang T'ing-chien, claiming that "with Huang, there was a major and irreversible decline."[36] Hsien-yü's



Pl. 97. Hsien-yü Shu (1257?–1302). *Song of the Stone Drums*, dated 1301. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 17⅝ x 143½ in. (44.8 x 364.7 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.29)





a



b

Figs. 174a, b. The character *o*

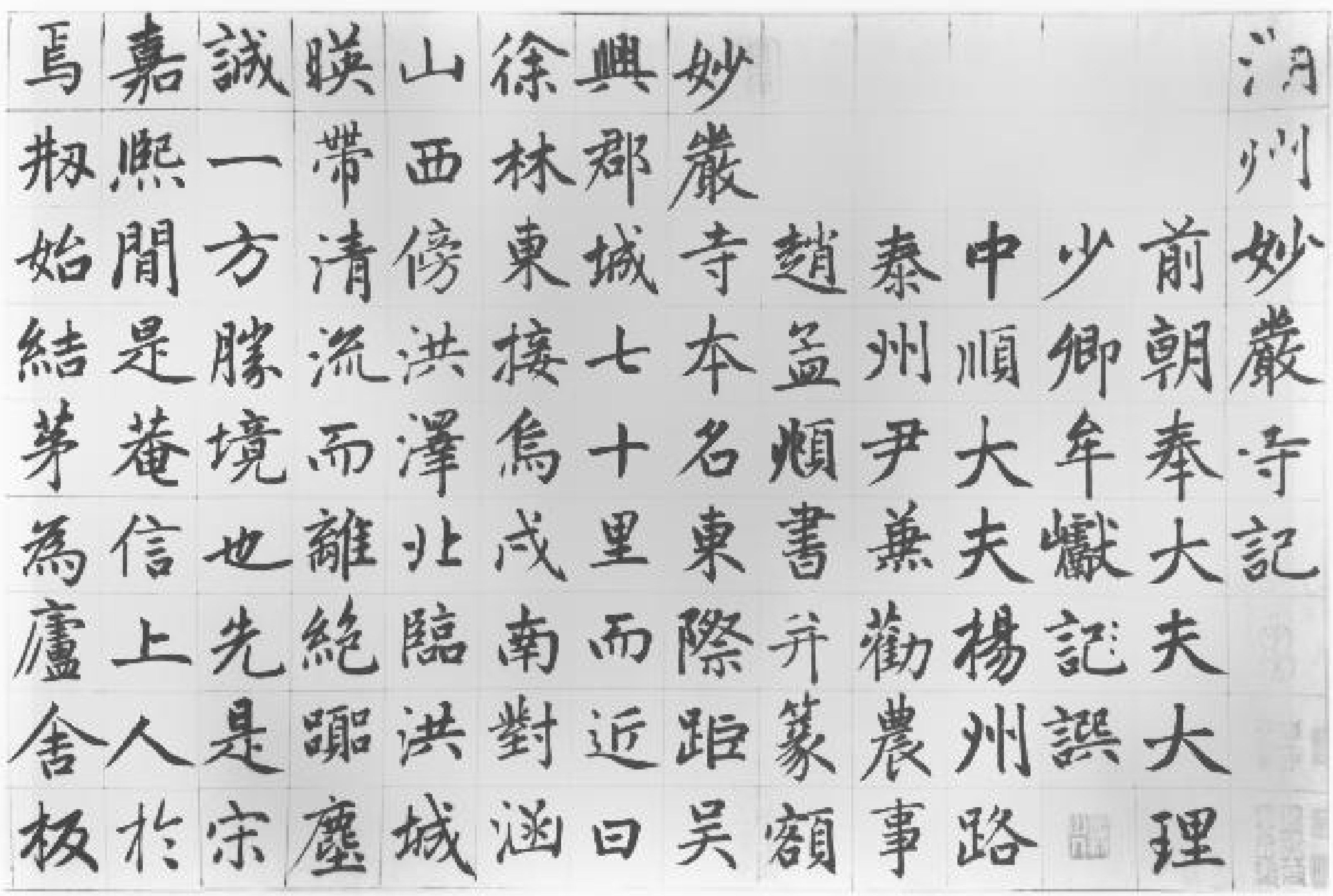
a. Hsien-yü Shu (1257?–1302). Detail from *Song of the Stone Drums* (pl. 97)

b. Wang Hsien-chih (344–388). Detail from *O-ch'ün t'ieh.* Private collection, Japan

criticism of Huang T'ing-chien's style was basically the same as Chao Meng-chien's criticism of Kao-tsung's manner: whereas T'ang cursive script, like T'ang regular script, shows a firm structure of "supports and walls," Huang T'ing-chien, in making powerful lopsided compositions with a round brush-work, ignores the principle of symmetry and balance.

Hsien-yü Shu's *Song of the Stone Drums* (pl. 97), dated 1301, is a transcription of the T'ang scholar Han Yü's (768–824) poem in praise of the Stone

Fig. 175. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery*, datable to 1309–10. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13½ x 143½ in. (34.2 x 364.5 cm). Lent by John B. Elliott, The Art Museum, Princeton University (L.1970.178)



Drums inscription, a celebrated monument of late Eastern Chou (ca. 422 B.C.) epigraphy. Hsien-yü's cursive script shows the influence of both Sun Kuo-t'ing (fig. 172) and Yen Chen-ch'ing (fig. 173), the characters horizontally balanced like Sun's and the individual brushstrokes well modulated like Yen's. In this calligraphy, Hsien-yü evokes Sun's stylistic sources, the archaic running-clerical script of Wang Hsi-chih (fig. 63) and Wang Hsien-chih.[37] His character *o*, or "geese" (fig. 174a), for example, is a direct quotation from the same character by Wang Hsien-chih (fig. 174b).

The principal architect of the Yüan renaissance in calligraphy and painting was Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322), whose extraordinary talent and accomplishments both transformed and dominated the arts during the Yüan period. A native of Wu-hsing, Chekiang, Chao Meng-fu was an eleventh-generation descendant of the founder of the Sung dynasty, Emperor T'ai-tsu. After Lin-an fell to the Mongols in 1276, he remained in Wu-hsing for ten years in order to pursue his studies. In 1286, Khubilai Khan, now known as the Yüan emperor Shih-tsu (r. 1271–94), began to recruit scholars from the south to serve at the Yüan court. Chao Meng-fu, then thirty-two, was presented at the capital and immediately caught the emperor's attention. In 1292, he was posted to the Chi-nan circuit as Director General. After Emperor Shih-tsu died in 1294, Chao returned to Wu-hsing. Offered a prefectship in the north in 1297, which he did not take up, he was posted in 1299 to Hangchow as director of Confucian studies in the Chiang-Che provincial government, a position he held until 1308. After 1309, he served again in the capital, rising to become the head of the Han-lin Academy in 1316. After retiring in 1319, he returned to Wu-hsing and died there in 1322. He was posthumously honored with the title Duke of Wei.[38]



a b

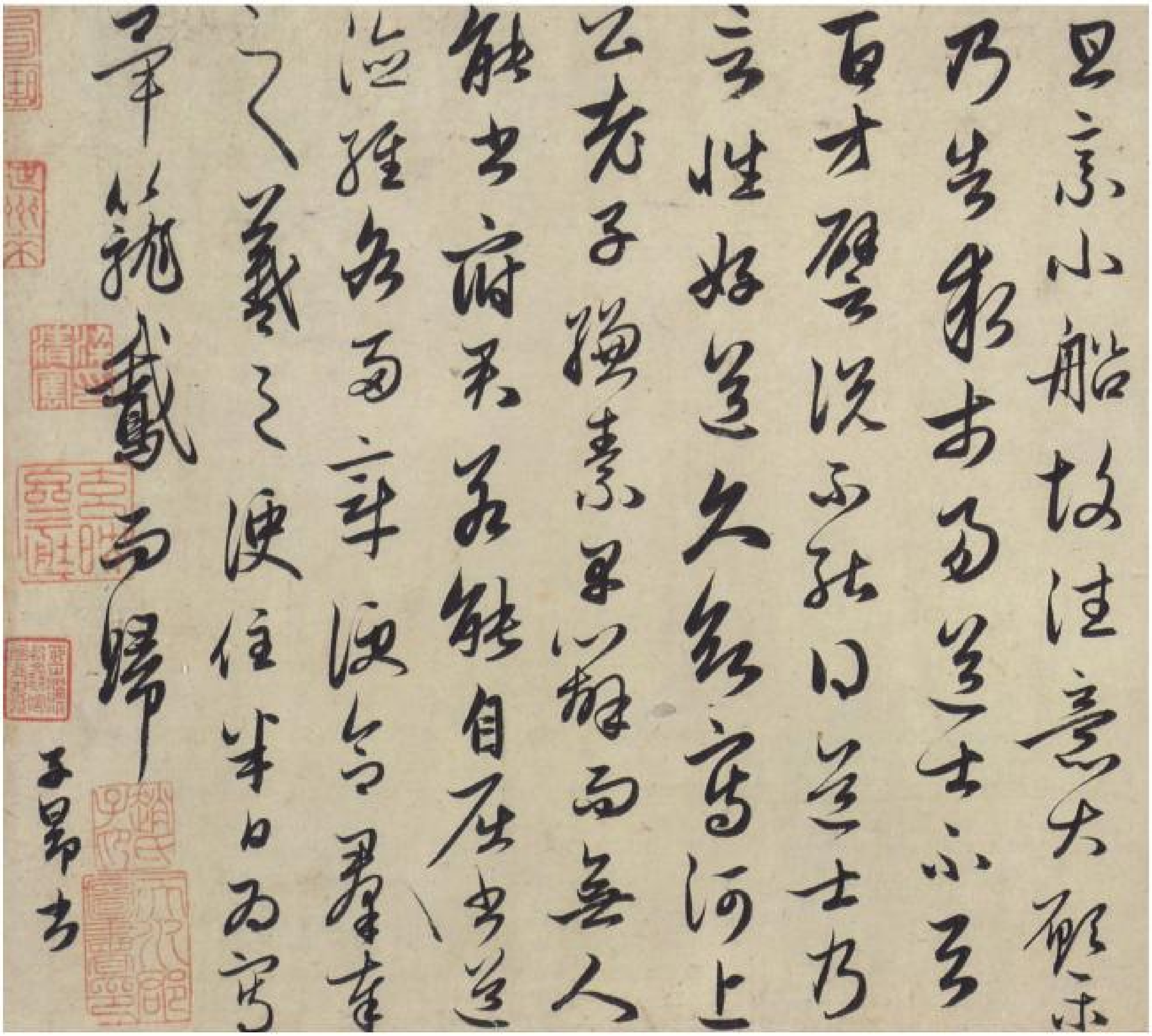
Figs. 176a, b. The phrase *ying-tai ch'ing-liu*

a. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). Detail from *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery* (fig. 175)

b. Attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). Detail from *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* (see also fig. 44)

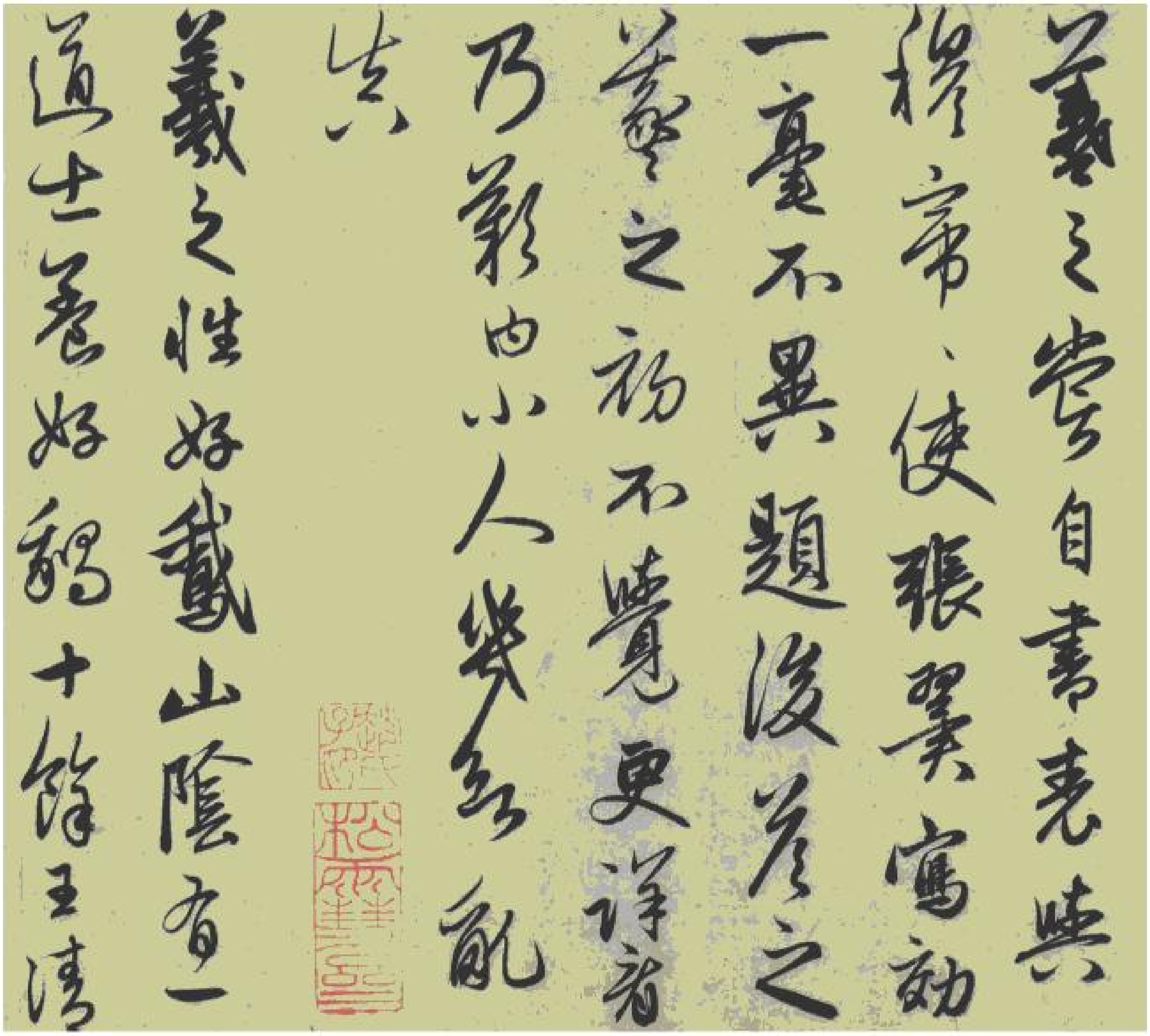
Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1311–20) is said to have enumerated a number of outstanding qualities in Chao Meng-fu: he was descended from the Sung imperial family; he was endowed with an elegant appearance; he was highly learned and of pure character; he was accomplished in literature and skilled in calligraphy and painting; and he possessed a profound knowledge of Buddhist and Taoist teachings.[39] In serving the Mongols, Chao Meng-fu encountered strong criticism from his Sung loyalist countrymen in the south. His succumbing to political pressure was contrasted with his fellow townsman Ch'ien Hsüan's resolute refusal to serve. Yet the success of Chao and others like him at the Mongol court played a crucial role in the preservation and continued vitality of Chinese culture during the Yüan period.

Like Li Kung-lin and Mi Fu of the late Northern Sung period, Chao Meng-fu believed that change in calligraphy and painting had to be guided by a reexamination of ancient models. In order to break away from the Southern Sung calligraphic style, which lacked a firm structure, he studied Northern Wei stele inscriptions and Tsin and T'ang manuscript writings. It was Chao's particular genius to be able to internalize and integrate disparate influences, recreating them in his own style. From 1299 to 1310, during his years in Hangchow and thereafter, he concentrated his study on the calligraphy of Wang



Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361), in particular the *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion* (fig. 44).[40] In the *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery* (fig. 175), datable to late 1309 or early 1310, Chao's mature large regular-script style displays a fluent synthesis of Tsin and T'ang models. In this work, for example, in the phrase *ying-tai ch'ing-liu* (fig. 176a), the characters in Wang's *Preface* (fig. 176b) are perfectly reproduced, though their well-modulated brushwork derives equally from the T'ang masters Ch'u Sui-liang and Yen Chen-ch'ing.[41]

Pl. 98. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *Four Anecdotes from the Life of Wang Hsi-chih*, 1310s. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 9½ x 48⅞ in. (24.2 x 116.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.30)



In creating a regular script for his own era through a revival and integration of ancient models, Chao attained the Confucian goal of the Great Synthesis (*Ta-ch'eng*). Chao's was the first new regular script since Yen Chen-ch'ing's that could be successfully adapted to both small and large writing, having not only beautifully modulated and well-balanced features but an easily recognizable and easily copied array of brushstrokes as well. By the early decades of the fourteenth century, the Chao style dominated the calligrapher's



a



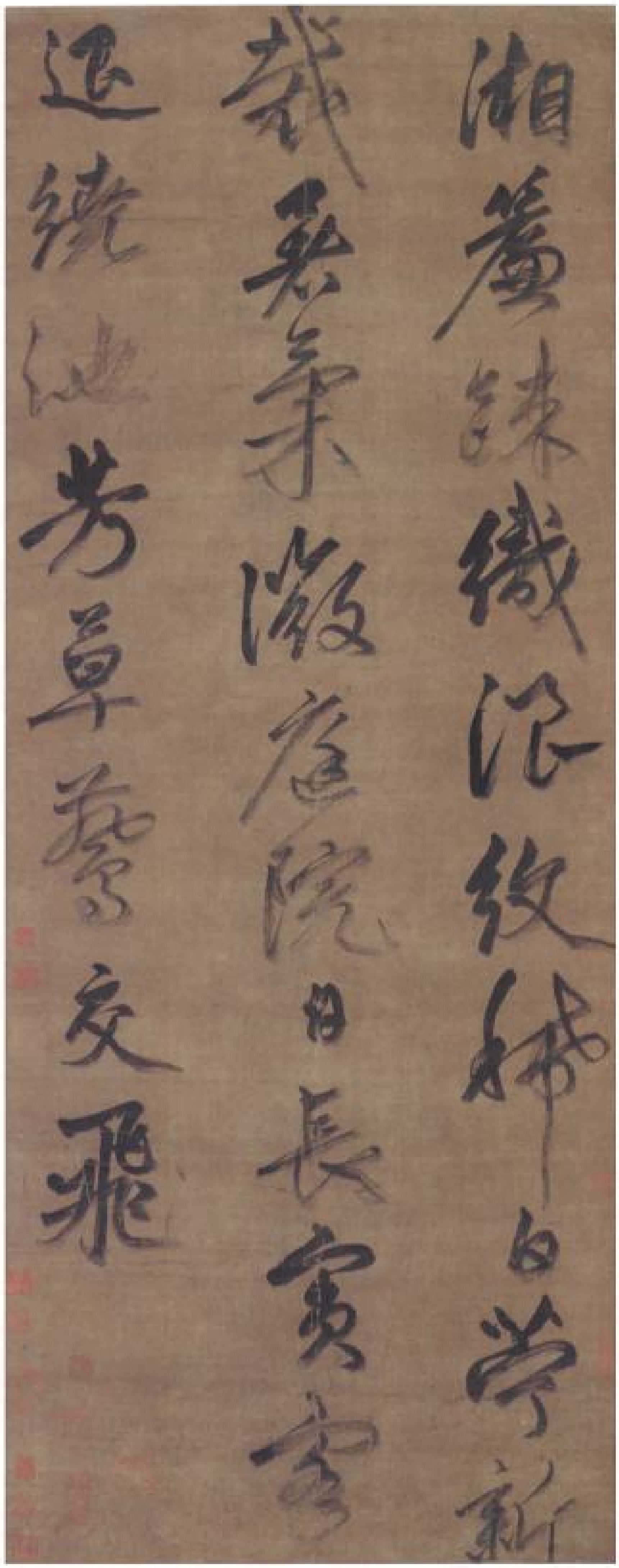
b

Fig. 177a. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). Detail from *Four Anecdotes from the Life of Wang Hsi-chih* (pl. 98)

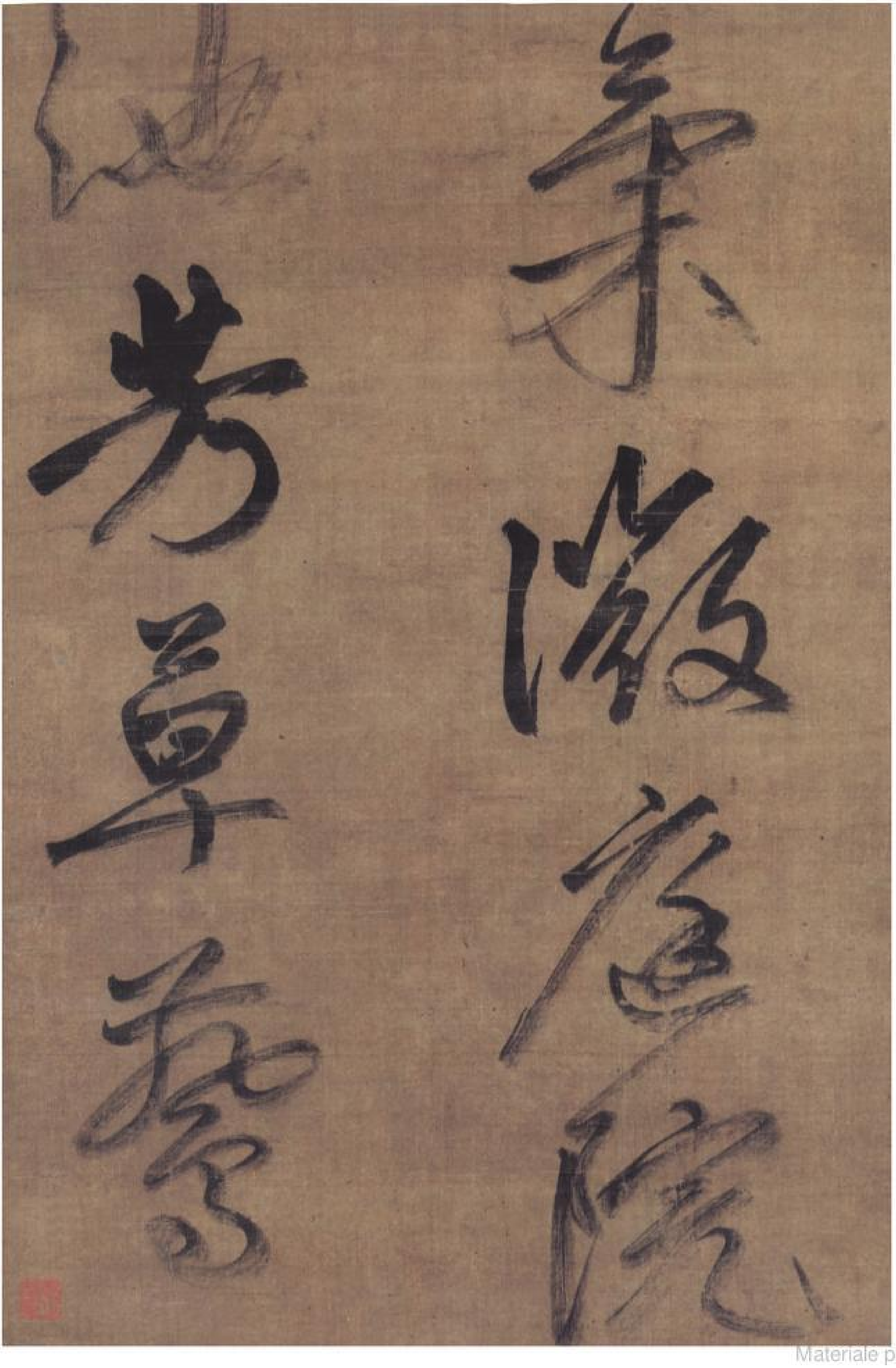
Fig. 177b. Wang Hsi-chih (ca. 303–ca. 361). *I Recently Received Your Letter* . . . Detail. Rubbing, album, ink on paper, height 10¼ in. (26 cm)

visual universe. Its influence was ubiquitous throughout the Yüan period, evident even in printed books, where it exemplified a more modern typeface than the Sung typeface inspired by T'ang models.[42] The chauvinistic historians of the Ming period, however, judged Chao Meng-fu for serving the Mongols, and despite its beauty and refinement, his calligraphic manner was deemed to be weak and effeminate when compared with the robust style of Yen Chen-ch'ing.

Chao Meng-fu's *Four Anecdotes from the Life of Wang Hsi-chih* (pl. 98), datable to the 1310s and written in a running script, relates four well-known stories originally recorded in the fifth-century *Memorial on Calligraphy*, by Yü Ho. In the first story, it is noted that Wang in his late years was especially admired for his archaic running-clerical script. The second story tells how Wang once helped a poor old woman fan vendor by writing calligraphy on her fans and thereby vastly increasing their market value. The third anecdote relates how someone copied Wang's handwriting so skillfully that even Wang himself had difficulty in distinguishing it from his own. And the fourth tale, a great favorite, tells of Wang's special love for geese:



Pl. 99. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *A Summer Idyll*, after 1319. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 52⅞ x 20⅞ in. (134.3 x 53 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.31)



> There was in Shan-yin a Taoist priest who had raised more than ten fine geese. One morning, Wang took a small boat to Shan-yin and was so delighted [with the geese] that he asked to buy them. The priest refused to sell them, and nothing could change his mind. Finally, the priest confided that as a lover of Taoist philosophy, he had long wished to own a copy of Lao-tzu's *Tao-te ching*, with commentary by Ho-shang-kung. He had gone so far as to have the silk prepared, but still no one would write for him. "If your excellency" [he suggested] "would care to write a couple of chapters for me, I would be happy to make a gift of the entire flock in exchange." So Wang stayed to write the chapters, and returned with the geese in a cage.[3]

As Ch'ien Hsüan had re-created Wang Hsi-chih's "romantic image" in his painting *Wang Hsi-chih Watching Geese* (pl. 71), so Chao Meng-fu here evokes Wang's image through calligraphy, in an elegant rendition of Wang's style that Chao reproduces so freely and so effortlessly (figs. 177a, b) that Wang seems literally to come alive at his brush tip.

In a late work, *A Summer Idyll* (pl. 99), a hanging scroll on silk done after his retirement to Wu-hsing in 1319, Chao Meng-fu, laying aside his earlier precise, intricately crafted style, writes in a natural, easy manner. In large characters (each about three inches in height) done with a dry brush in the flying-white technique, the seven-word quatrain, composed by Chao himself, reads:

> Through the loosely woven bamboo curtain from Hsiang, I see a sparse, wavy pattern.
> In my newly tailored white sackcloth gown, gentle heat rises.
> The shadow of the sun over the courtyard grows longer, and visitors stay away.
> About the pond the grass is fragrant, and swallows fly in pairs.

The writing, despite its large size, is gentle and spare and filled with Chao's fond recollections of the heroic calligraphy on Northern Wei steles—the character *fang*, or "fragrant," for example. By 1319, Chao, in permanent retirement in Wu-hsing, had lost his beloved wife, Madame Kuan. Written within two years of his own death, *A Summer Idyll* finds him, after an active life at court, finally living in peace at his scholar's retreat.

Pl. 99a. Detail, pl. 99

1. Discontinued after 1235 in the north and 1276 in the south, the examination system was restored briefly in 1315, abolished again in 1335, then resumed in 1342 and maintained until 1366. In all, the *chin-shih* examinations were held sixteen times under the Yüan, but produced only about one thousand *chin-shih* graduates, a very small number compared with those produced during the Sung or Ming dynasties. I owe this information to a personal communication from Professor Frederick W. Mote.
2. See Shen C. Y. Fu, *Yüan-tai huang-shih shu-hua shou-ts'ang shih-lüeh* (A Brief History of the Yüan Imperial Collections of Calligraphy and Painting) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1981); and Chiang I-han, *Yüan-tai K'uei-chang-ko chi K'uei-chang jen-wu* (The K'uei-chang Pavilion and the K'uei-chang Personalities During the Yüan Period) (Taipei: Ching-lien Ch'u-pan Shih-ye Kung-ssu, 1981).
3. After translation in Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 188–89.

4. The identification of the P'i-ling school was first made by Shimada Shūjirō, in *Sekai bijutsu zenshū* (Encyclopedia of World Art) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1951), vol. 14, pl. 66; see also Suzuki Kei, "Oshimei hitsu renchi sui-kin-zu ni tsuite" (On *Lotus Pond and Water Fowl*, by Yü Tzu-ming), *Yamato bunka*, no. 31 (October 1959), pp. 71–75. A seal on one of the two pictures at the Chion-in reads, "P'i-ling Yü shih." On the Metropolitan Museum paintings, fragments of two seals are found along their upper borders; they read: "[?]-hui [?] shih."
5. The botanical information in these two paintings and on the following painting, *Flowers* (pl. 85), has been verified by two authorities, Dr. Edward Morris of Greenwich, Conn., and Dr. Rupert Barnaby of the New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, N.Y.
6. See Shimada Shūjirō and Yonezawa Yoshiho, *Painting of the Sung and Yüan Dynasties* (Tokyo: Mayuyama and Co., 1952), p. 15; more recently, discussed by Toda Teisuke, "Lotus-Pond Paintings" (in Japanese and English), in *International Symposium on Art Historical Studies, 1, 1982, Kyōto: Flowers and Birds Motif in Asia* (Kyōto: Dō Kenkyūkai, 1983), pp. 28–32.
7. See Shimada Shūjirō, "Ryokeiho no sōchūzu: Jōshū sōchūga ni tsuite" (*Flowers and Insects*, by Lü Ching-fu: Study on "Flowers-and-Insects" Paintings of Ch'ang-chou District), *Bijutsu kenkyū*, no. 150 (1948), pp. 187–96.
8. This connection was first pointed out by Roderick Whitfield in his paper "A Dated Yüan Handscroll of the Piling School and the Problem of *Early Autumn*," prepared for a symposium on Ming painting held at the Cleveland Museum of Art, May 1989.
9. See Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang-Tzu*, p. 219; also cited by Whitfield, "Dated Yüan Handscroll."
10. For a biographical study of Li K'an, see Kao Mu-sen, "Li K'an: An Early Fourteenth-Century Painter," *Chinese Culture* 22, no. 3 (September 1981), pp. 85–101; see also "Li K'an" in Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Yüan Dynasty) (Shanghai, 1980), pp. 100–121; and Chang Kuang-pin, "Li K'an: Wen Hu-chou chu-p'ai ti chung-hsing-che" (Li K'an: The Painter Who Revived Wen T'ung's School of Bamboo Painting), in *Yüan-ch'ao shu-hua-shih yen-chiu lun-chi* (Collection of Essays on the History of Yüan Dynasty Calligraphy and Painting) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1979), pp. 59–69.
11. See the early study of Li K'an's *Chu-p'u* by William C. White, "Li K'an's Treatise on Bamboos," in White, *An Album of Chinese Bamboos: A Study of a Set of Ink-Bamboo Drawings, A.D. 1785* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939), pp. 23–29; and a German translation by Aschwin Lippe, "Li K'an und seine ausführliche Beschreibung des Bambus," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 18 (1942–43), pp. 1–35, 83–124.
12. See *P'ei-wen-chai shu hua p'u* (Encyclopedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the P'ei-wen Studio; 1708), compiled by Wang Yüan-ch'i et al. (reprint, Taipei: Hsin-hsing Shu-chü Yu-hsien Kung-ssu, 1972), vol. 1, *chüan* 14, p. 304.
13. Ibid.
14. See Maggie Bickford et al., *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1985), pp. 64–67.
15. See Shimada Shūjirō, *Shōsai baifu* (Pine Studio Plum Manual) (Hiroshima: Municipal Central Library, 1988), p. 207.
16. For biographical studies, see Chu-tsing Li, "Wang Mien," in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 1395–98; Chi Jo-hsin, "Wang Mien yü Mo-mei ti fa-chan" (Wang Mien and the Development of Ink-Plum), parts 1–3, *Ku-kung hsüeh-shu chi-k'an* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1984), pp. 37–58; 2, no. 2 (Winter 1984), pp. 41–66; 2, no. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 29–46; and Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 350–70.
17. See Wu Ching-tzu (1701–1754), *Ju-lin wai-shih* (The Scholars) (Hong Kong: T'aip'ing Shu-chü, 1969), pp. 1–13.
18. See Fong Chow, "A Dragon-Boat Regatta," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 26 (May 1968), pp. 389–98.
19. Three versions of *Dragon Boat Regatta on Chin-ming Lake* are at the National Palace Museum, Taipei; one version is at the Palace Museum, Beijing; one is at the Detroit Art Institute; and one is in the collection of Ch'en Chi of Tokyo and Hong Kong.
20. See Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, p. 263.
21. For Hsia Yung, see Wei Tung, "Hsia Yung chi-ch'i chieh-hua" (Hsia Yung and His Boundary Painting), *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, no. 4 (1984), pp. 68–83.
22. This essay was identified by Xu Jie (Hsü Chieh), a graduate student at Princeton University.
23. For the flooding of the Yellow River and its ramifications, see John W. Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians: Aspects of Political Change in Late Yüan China*, Studies in Oriental Culture, 9 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), especially pp. 83–89, 99–103.
24. Tu Fu, *Tu Kung-pu shih-chi* (The Poems of Tu Fu) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1972), vol. 1, *chüan* 9, p. 38.
25. For Lo Chih-ch'uan, see Shimada Shūjirō, "Rachisen no sekkōho-zu ni tsuite" (On Lo Chih-ch'uan's *Snowy Riverbank*), *Hōun* 22 (1938), pp. 41–52; and Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 332–37.
26. See Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui-*

k'ao (Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting; 1682) (reprint of the 1921 facsimile, Taipei: Cheng-chung Shu-chü, 1958), vol. 3, *chüan* 11, p. 422.

27. See Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, p. 333.
28. For T'ang Ti, see Kao Mu-sen, "T'ang Ti ch'i-jen ch'i-hua" (T'ang Ti, the Man and His Paintings), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1973), pp. 43–56; She Ch'eng, "Yüan-tai T'ang Ti chih yen-chiu" (A Study of T'ang Ti of the Yüan Dynasty), parts 1, 2, *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1982), pp. 33–54, and 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1982), pp. 1–24; Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 214–34; and Shih Shou-chien, "T'ang Ti (1287–1355) and the Development of the Li Kuo Style During the Yüan Dynasty" (in Chinese), *Mei-shu yen-chiu*, no. 5 (March 1991), pp. 83–131.
29. See Robert E. Harrist, Jr., "*Watching Clouds Rise*: A Tang Dynasty Couplet and Its Illustration in Song Painting," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 78, no. 7 (November 1991), pp. 301–23.
30. Wang Wei, *Wang Yu-ch'eng chi chien-chu* (The Collected Works of Wang Wei, with Annotation) (Shanghai: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1961), vol. 1, p. 35.
31. Kuo Hsi, *Lin-ch'üan kao-chih* (Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams), compiled by Kuo Ssu, 1117, in Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1973), vol. 1, p. 641.
32. Chao Meng-chien, "Chao Tzu-ku shu-fa lun" (Chao Meng-chien's Discussion of Calligraphy), in Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui-k'ao*, vol. 1, *chüan* 3, p. 166.
33. For the mitigating influence of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai on early Mongol rule in China, see Igor de Rachewiltz, "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189–1243): Buddhist Idealist and Confucian Statesman," in A. F. Wright and Dennis Twichett, eds., *Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 189–216.
34. See Chapter 3, pp. 143–52.
35. See Marilyn Wong Fu, "The Impact of the Re-unification: Northern Elements in the Life and Art of Hsien-yü Shu (1257?–1302) and Their Relation to Early Yüan Literati Culture," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, edited by John D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 371–433.
36. See National Palace Museum (and National Central Museum), Taipei, *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* (The National Palace Museum Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting), 2d ed. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1965), vol. 3, pp. 227–28; translated in Shen C. Y. Fu et al., *Traces of the Brush: Studies in Chinese Calligraphy*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1977), p. 86.
37. In the same private Hangchow collection that housed Sun Kuo-t'ing's masterpiece there was an especially fine rubbing of Wang Hsi-chih's *Shih-ch'i t'ieh* (Letter Written on the Seventeenth); see Marilyn Fu, "Impact of Reunification," pp. 396ff.
38. See Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 30–99; Chu-tsing Li, "Chao Meng-fu chih yen-chiu" (A Study of Chao Meng-fu), parts 1, 2, *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1981), pp. 33–40; no. 3 (Spring 1982), pp. 1–13; and Jen Tao-pin, *Chao Meng-fu hsi-nien* (Chronology of Chao Meng-fu) (Honan: Jen-min Ch'u-pan-she, 1984).
39. See Yang Tsai, "Chao Meng-fu hsing-chuang" (Biography of Chao Meng-fu), in *Sung-hsüeh-chai wen-chi* (Collected Works of the Sung-hsüeh Studio [of Chao Meng-fu]), in *Li-tai hua-chia shih-wen chi* (A Collection of Poetry and Prose Writings by Painters) (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü, 1970), vol. 3, addenda, pp. 487–510.
40. For Chao's inspired 1310 study of the Ting-wu rubbing of Wang Hsi-chih's *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*, see Wang Lien-ch'i, "Chao Meng-fu lin-pa Lan-t'ing-hsü k'ao" (A Study of Chao Meng-fu's Copy of and Colophons on the *Preface to the Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*), parts 1, 2, in *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, no. 1 (1985), pp. 36–47, and no. 2 (1985), pp. 60–70.
41. For a detailed stylistic analysis of this work, see Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984), pp. 99–102.
42. See Pao-chen Ch'en and Hung-lam Chu, "The Impact of Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322) in Late Yüan and Ming," in Frederick W. Mote et al., "Calligraphy and the East Asian Book," *Gest Library Journal* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 111–32.
43. For a full translation of the text of the four anecdotes, see Kwan S. Wong, assisted by Stephen Addiss, *Masterpieces of Sung and Yüan Dynasty Calligraphy from the John M. Crawford, Jr., Collection*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1981), pp. 72–73.



8 Revival and Synthesis: Yüan Literati Painting

Yüan literati (*wen-jen*) painting, an outgrowth of Sung scholar-official (*shih-ta-fu*) art, was born of the Mongol conquest, yet it owed nothing to the Mongols. Unlike later European colonial conquerors, who introduced Christianity and European culture to non-European peoples, the Mongols brought neither new religion nor new culture to China. Living under the Mongols, the Chinese, feeling ever more superior, reaffirmed their cultural inheritance and their identity with their past.

The changes brought about by Yüan literati painters were so fundamental and so far-reaching that they permanently altered the nature of pictorial art in China. With the end of the Sung ideololgy of a moral cultural order (*wen*), the didactic art of the Academy, which had illustrated and represented the ideals of the imperial state, lost its hold. Literati painting, on the other hand, by emphasizing the cultivation of the self, became for the artist the vehicle for moral and cultural survival. The expression of a class of people living in voluntary exile under alien domination, Yüan literati painting was undecorative, unrealistic, and often ambiguous in expression and ambivalent in feeling. Turning from figural and narrative painting as practiced by the professional and academic artists, literati painters developed a calligraphic approach to landscape painting as a means of "writing ideas" (*hsieh-i*) that employed words as well as images.

The literati painters first studied ancient models, formulating a commentary and a critique of their history. By systematically translating ancient landscape idioms into simplified calligraphic formulas, they created a new, abstract vocabulary of expressive modes. During the early fourteenth century, as seen in the works of Lo Chih-ch'uan (pl. 92) and T'ang Ti (pls. 93–95), painters favored the more descriptive idiom of the Northern Sung landscape masters Li Ch'eng and Kuo Hsi. By the mid-fourteenth century, however, the more evocative southern landscape tradition of Tung Yüan (died 962; fig. 31)—which Kuo Hsi had characterized as the "earthen" mode of landscape—had become the preferred idiom of the literati painters in Chiang-nan. Once superseded by Li Ch'eng's more dramatic northern landscape style but rediscovered in the late Northern Sung period by the scholar-critic Mi Fu (1052–1107), the tenth-century southern style of Tung Yüan was described by Mi as "without clever artifice, but possessing a natural, truthful quality."[1] By its very nature, the brush technique of the Li–Kuo billowing-cloud rock and crab-claw tree idiom

Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Detail from *Woods and Valleys of Yü-shan* (pl. 118)



Pl. 100. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322), Chao Yung (1289–after 1360), and Chao Lin (active second half of 14th century). *Grooms and Horses*, dated 1296 and 1359. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11⅞ x 69¾ in. (30.3 x 177.1 cm). Gift of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1988.135)

is more suited for descriptive realism, while the Tung Yüan hemp-fiber pattern that describes soft rolling hills, done with parallel, round brushwork, is more readily equated with calligraphic abstraction. The interest that late Yüan literati landscape holds for us, sparse of detail and economic of means, lies not so much in a technically virtuosic rendering of magnificent scenery as in the projection and presentation of the artist's own response to the world. Created in a highly personal language, calligraphic painting, accompanied by poetry written by the artist, is the revealing of a complex personality, the combination of words and images that affords the expression of nuances of emotion and intellect on many different levels.

In their emphasis on the communication of individual expression, the late Yüan literati painters came to be regarded as powerful artistic personalities. The so-called Four Great Masters of the late Yüan—Huang Kung-wang, Wu Chen, Ni Tsan, and Wang Meng—all valued individuality above tradition. Each of them placed great importance on the cultivation of the spirit, and each produced his finest work in his seventies or eighties. By contrast, their younger contemporaries, many of whom were killed during the early Ming, never grew to artistic maturity, and consequently the literati painting movement subsided with the end of the Yüan.

Yüan Paintings of Horses

Grooms and Horses (pl. 100), a handscroll on paper, shows three pairs of horses and grooms. The first, dated 1296, is by Chao Meng-fu (pl. 100a); the two later pairs, dated 1359, are by his son Chao Yung (1289–after 1360) and his grandson Chao Lin (active second half of 14th century). Chao Meng-fu presented the original handscroll the year he painted it to a surveillance commissioner named Fei-ch'ing. Some sixty-three years later, the scroll was in the collection of Hsieh Po-li, an assistant prefect of Sung-chiang, Kiangsu Prov-



ince, who commissioned the two companion pairs from Chao's son and grandson, thus creating a work of three generations.

All three pairs of horses and attendants are modeled after Li Kung-lin's *Five Tribute Horses* (fig. 81), which had in turn been inspired by Han Kan's legendary *Night-Shining White* (pl. 1). During the late 1290s, Chao Meng-fu made a careful study of horse paintings by both Han Kan and Li Kung-lin. He felt a special affinity for Li's *Five Tribute Horses*, about which he wrote:

> How elegant are the five horses,
> Standing free in the autumn wind.
> Because the emperor has renounced military ambition,
> They feed on grass and grain through bountiful years.
>
> In the morning they go to the palace gates,
> In the evening they rest at the twelve stables.
> Their powerful forms shine in the rising sun,
> They fly at dusk through the mist.
> How they look about, displaying their high spirits,
> Like dragons cavorting in a field of sacred mushrooms.
>
> These noble steeds shall never perish!
> Through calligraphy and painting they shall live forever,
> While the proud stone steeds of the [T'ang imperial] Chao mausoleum,
> Alas, crumble through the passing years.[3]

Han Kan in *Night-Shining White* had expressed the martial spirit of the T'ang dynasty through a highly realistic drawing technique, using precise contouring and sensitive ink shading. Li Kung-lin, in the *Five Tribute Horses*, on the other hand, creates through calligraphic brushwork a subtle interaction between the grooms and horses. Chao Meng-fu here follows Li Kung-lin, choosing a calligraphic, linear expression over realistic representation.

The theme of the horse and groom was a well-established metaphor for the relationship between a junior scholar-official seeking employment and the



Pl. 100a. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). Detail from Section 1, dated 1296, of *Grooms and Horses* (pl. 100)

senior official who served as his sponsor. Po-lo, a legendary judge and trainer of horses, was the prototype of the high-ranking official who recognizes talent in a younger man. In an essay on Po-lo, the famous T'ang dynasty writer Han Yü observed, "The world must first have a Po-lo before it can have fine horses. But there are always more fine horses than there are Po-los!"[3] In 1286, Chao Meng-fu, a young man of thirty-two, was discovered by the imperial censor Ch'eng Chü-fu, and arriving at the Mongol court the following year, he caught the attention of Khubilai Khan, now Emperor Shih-tsu.

In 1296, the metaphor of Po-lo had a special significance for Chao Meng-fu. Chao first scored great bureaucratic successes in a series of bold policy initiatives in postal, transportation, and penal reforms; in 1291, he even contributed to the ouster of the powerful and feared Muslim councillor Sengge. Such unprecedented accomplishments for a southern Chinese aristocrat, however, were possible only because Shih-tsu (in effect, Chao's Po-lo) had taken a personal interest in him and had lent him his support. The days of Chao's active involvement in court politics ended with Shih-tsu's death, in 1294; his later appointments were confined to educational and academic postings. For Chao, service under the Mongols was a mixed blessing. Almost as soon as he arrived at the capital, he began writing poems that expressed his longing for the pleasures of country living:

> Yesterday, I was a gull roaming the waters;
> Today, I am a bird in a cage.[4]

After Shih-tsu's death, Chao returned in late 1295 to his native Wu-hsing. His ambivalence about retiring from court life is reflected in the painting *Man on Horseback* (fig. 178), dated 1296. The painting shows an official (a self-portrait?) on a horse, clad in a red robe and wearing a T'ang-style hat. The image, which represents a scholar-official on the job, derives from Li Kung-lin's illustration for the *Classic of Filial Piety* (fig. 179), a depiction of an official arriving at the city gates to serve as the district's governing magistrate.

Chao's *Groom and Horse*, also painted in 1296, is dedicated to Fei-ch'ing, the surveillance commissioner, which suggests that Chao was at this time seeking a new sponsor. The painting combines both realistic and symbolic representation. The groom, who represents the commissioner (a would-be Po-lo), is highly realistic, the bearded face sensitively rendered and the subtly modulated drapery line aptly describing the human form beneath.[5] The horse, on the other hand, is presented in a more abstract mode, its foreshortened body circular and balloonlike. The bond between the master and his horse is suggested not only by their expressions but also by a series of circles—the rein, the horse's neck, and its hindquarter—that joins them graphically. The abstract circular patterns of which the horse is composed, perhaps inspired by the powerfully round hindquarter of Han Kan's *Night-Shining White* (pl. 1), also recalls Ch'ien Hsüan's rendering of pear blossoms as perfectly round patterns on the picture plane (pl. 69).

Chao Yung's piebald horse and Chao Lin's horse with "jade mottled"





Fig. 178. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *Man on Horseback*, dated 1296. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11 13/16 x 19 5/16 in. (30 x 51.3 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Fig. 179. Li Kung-lin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Classic of Filial Piety* (pls. 8a–g). Detail from Chapter 11, "Five Punishments." Handscroll, ink on silk, 8 5/8 x 187 1/4 in. (21.9 x 475.5 cm). From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Promised Gift of Oscar L. and Jack C. Tang

(*yü-hua*) markings, added to the scroll in 1359—one accompanied by a heavily bearded Central Asian groom and the other by a short-bearded man in a red robe—are, like Chao Meng-fu's horse, modeled after that of Li Kung-lin. The drawing of the later additions is, however, heavier and more conventional, and for both Chao Yung and Chao Lin, the image seems to have had less to do with metaphor than with the genre of horse painting.

The large handscroll *Six Horses* (pl. 25), the first half of which was painted by a late twelfth-century Chin artist, is, like *Grooms and Horses*, an example of a painting that has developed over the centuries by the addition of figures by later artists. In the second half of the scroll, the proud Mongol rider and his horses are realistically represented in strong, incisive brushlines (pl. 25a). If we were to apply the literati aesthetic of Chao Meng-fu, the professional artisan's brushstrokes might be described as somewhat hard and unsubtle, too overtly modern and realistic. As Chao wrote in one of his colophons,

> In painting, one must capture the spirit of antiquity [*ku-i*]; without it, all skill is in vain. The modern painter knows only how to draw with a fine line and to use rich and brilliant colors. . . . My own paintings may appear simple and carelessly rendered, but connoisseurs know that they are based on ancient models and so judge them to be of high merit.[6]

Chao Meng-fu's Calligraphic Landscape Style

For Chao Meng-fu, the reality of the scholar-official's life in the capital was totally changed from what it had been during the Sung. Chao's very desire to serve, in time-honored Confucian fashion but now under Mongol rule, was deemed by Sung loyalists as evidence of moral weakness, and he found himself in a position of having to apologize for an act many considered degrading, indeed unforgivable, for a former Sung prince.

Pl. 25a. Unidentified artist (14th century). Detail from *Six Horses* (pl. 25)



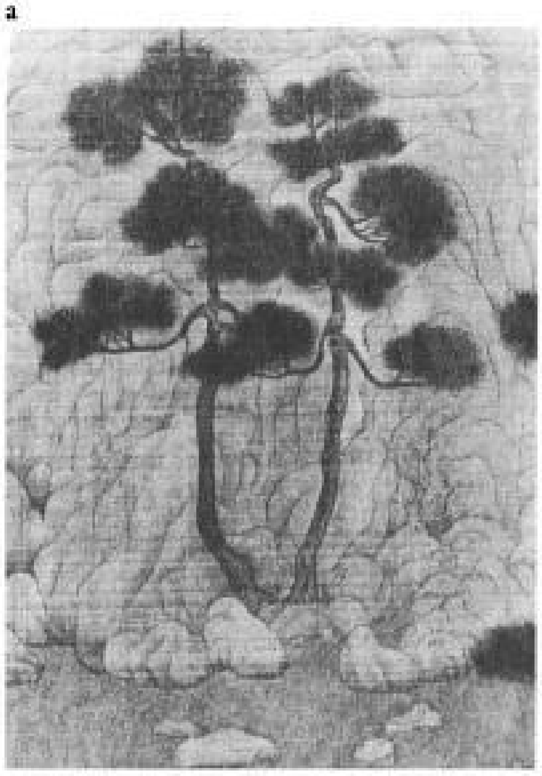


In *The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü* (fig. 180), a short handscroll datable to the late 1280s, soon after he arrived at the Yüan court, Chao expresses his conflicting feelings about political engagement and service to the court versus a life of reclusion.[7] The painting shows Hsieh K'un (also known as Hsieh Yu-yü, 280–322), an Eastern Tsin courtier who claimed to have retained the "mind of the mountains and valleys" while he continued to serve at court.[8] To avoid an overtly realistic description, Chao chose the archaic blue-and-green idiom, using a round, controlled iron-wire brushline done in the ancient seal-script calligraphic style (figs. 181a, b). Compared with the blue-and-green landscape of Ch'ien Hsüan (pl. 71), which displays a schematic archaism, Chao's landscape explores the dynamic energies of individual rock and tree forms as seal-script pictographs. The outlines of the trees and rocks, by following the seal-cutting design principle of balancing positive and negative patterns, activate and define the spaces between them, as well as the spaces within them.

By applying calligraphic techniques and principles to landscape painting,

Fig. 180. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü*, late 1280s. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10¾ x 46 in. (27.4 x 117 cm). Museum purchase from the Edward L. Elliott Family Collection, The Fowler McCormick Fund, The Art Museum, Princeton University (1984-13)

a



b

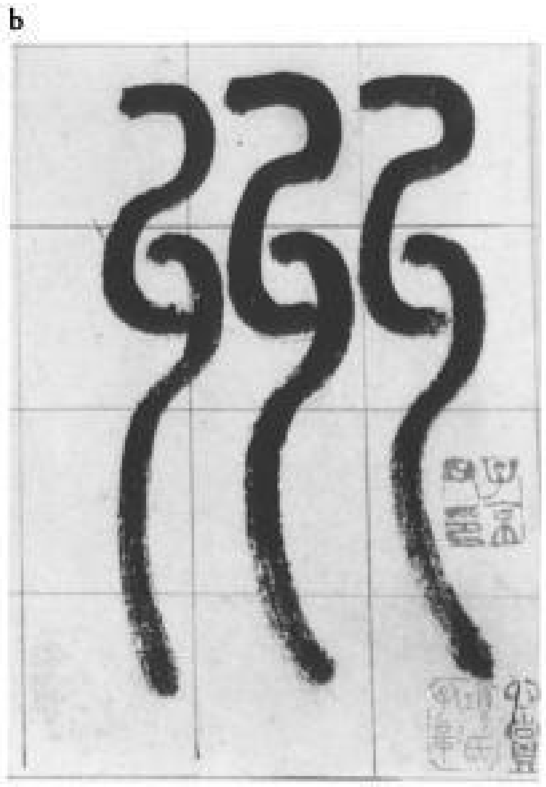


Fig. 181a. Detail, fig. 180

Fig. 181b. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery*, datable to 1309–10. Detail, seal script character from the title. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13½ x 143½ in. (34.2 x 364.5 cm). Lent by John B. Elliott, The Art Museum, Princeton University (L.1970.178)



Fig. 182. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). ***Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains***, dated early 1296. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11¼ x 36¾ in. (28.4 x 93.2 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Chao Meng-fu transformed it into a new art form. Systematically reducing ancient landscape styles to calligraphic pattern, he communicates, beyond physical description, personal meaning and imagery. In *Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains* (fig. 182), dated early 1296, after his return to Wu-hsing, and dedicated to his good friend the connoisseur and collector Chou Mi, Chao uses the southern "earthen" landscape mode of Tung Yüan to recollect a stretch of northern landscape in Shantung, where he had served as governor-general.[9] Across the short handscroll composition on paper, two schematic mountain forms, one triangular and the other semicircular, rise above a flat marshland, recalling a painting of the eighth-century Wang Wei's scholar's retreat, *Wang-ch'uan Villa* (fig. 27). The central section is a quotation from Tung Yüan's *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (fig. 31), a composition well known to Yüan painters.[10] In modeling the mountains and sandy beaches, Chao uses Tung's draping hemp-fiber texture pattern: the dry and exquisitely executed calligraphic brushlines, rendered in the thickening-and-thinning regular script brush technique, are blurred and fused, creating an atmospheric effect around the trees and mountains. Chao's treatment of the thick clumps of trees in the middle distance, however, transforms Tung's additive composition into a visually continuous vista, with a spatially foreshortened ground plane.

In his late style, exemplified by *Twin Pines, Level Distance* (pl. 101), a work done about 1310, Chao executes the Li Ch'eng–Kuo Hsi idiom (pls. 9, 11) of devil-face rocks and crab-claw tree branches in a combination of cursive and seal-script brush styles. To the left, at the end of the scroll, Chao writes:

> Besides studying calligraphy, I have since my youth dabbled in painting. Landscape I have always found difficult. This is because ancient [landscape] masterpieces of the T'ang, such as the works of Wang Wei, the great and the small Li [Ssu-hsün and Chao-tao], and Cheng Ch'ien, no longer survive. As for the Five Dynasties masters, Ching Hao, Kuan T'ung, Tung Yüan, and Fan K'uan, all of whom succeeded one another, their brushwork is totally different from that of the more recent painters. What I paint may not rank with the work of the ancient masters, but compared with recent paintings, I daresay mine are quite different.



Pl. 101. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). *Twin Pines, Level Distance.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 10½ x 42¼ in. (26.9 x 107.4 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.5)

Here, Chao returns to Li Ch'eng's and Kuo Hsi's favorite theme, the ancient pine, which, as a symbol of the virtuous gentleman, had a special significance for Chao in his old age. Compared with Kuo Hsi's magical and spontaneous rendering of billowing rocks and gnarled trees (pl. 11a)—a scroll that Chao inscribed in the late 1300s—Chao's round, centered calligraphic brushwork (pl. 101a) is careful and deliberate, and the individual marks, no longer subordinate to realistic representation, have a life of their own. Chao's use of the Li–Kuo landscape idiom is also very different from the methods of Lo Chih-ch'uan (pl. 92) and T'ang Ti (pl. 93), who had tried to recapture Kuo Hsi's emotional realism. Rather than describing natural forms or modeling continuous surfaces, Chao in his kinetic brushwork, by cutting into the picture plane and opening up forms in space, experiments with new formal possibilities. Individual brushstrokes, invested with a crisp self-assurance, transfigure observed nature into pure forms of brush and ink.

By thus transforming painting into the equivalent of calligraphy, turning painting into an exploration of itself and focusing on the expressive potential of brush and ink, the early Yüan literati painter created a startling prefiguration of Western modernism. Chao summed up his calligraphic painting method in the following verse:

> Rocks as in flying-white [script], trees as in seal script;
> When painting bamboo, one applies the spreading-eight [late clerical]
> method.
> Those who understand this thoroughly
> Will realize that calligraphy and painting have always been the same.[11]



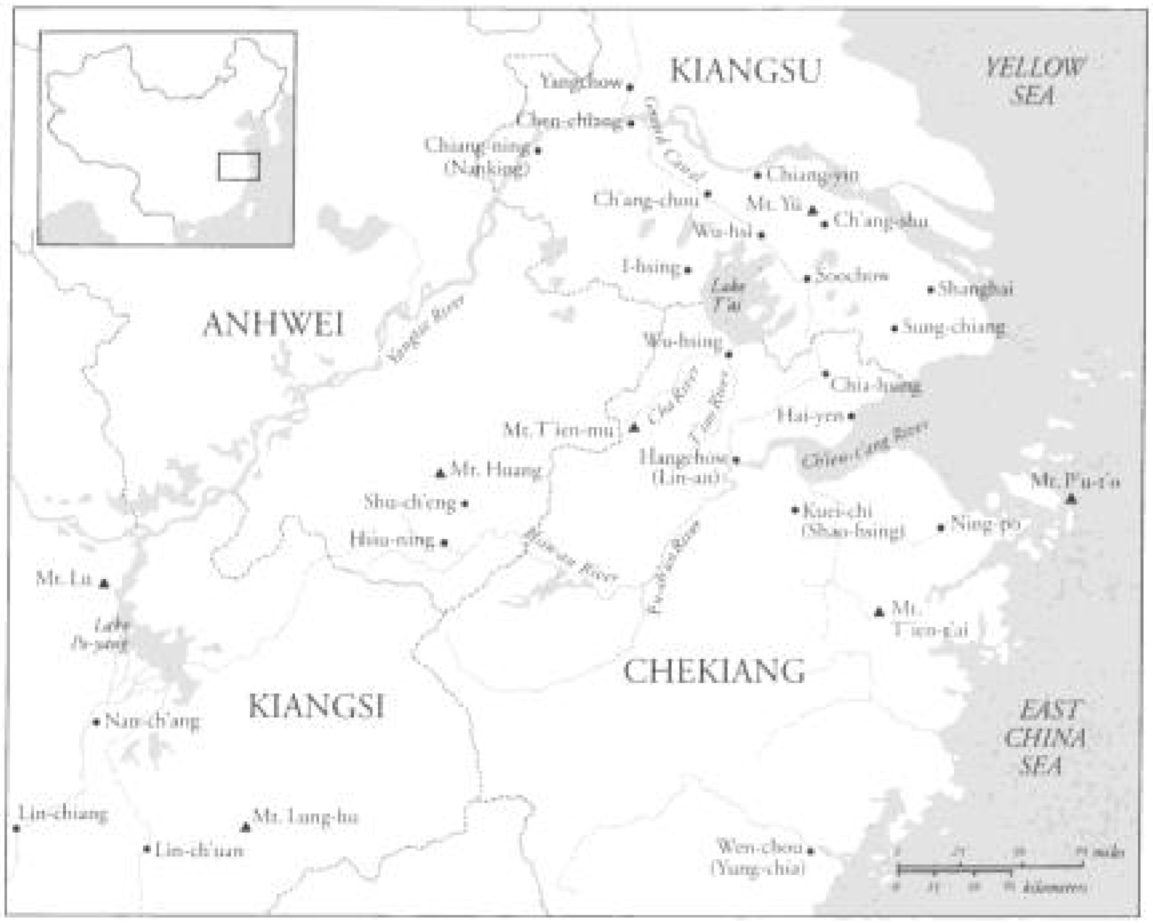
The Late Yüan Literati Painters

The art of the late Yüan literati painters developed in the grain-rich lower Yangtze delta region of southeastern China (Map 5, p. 443), an area that encompasses the modern cities of Nanking, Shanghai, and Hangchow. At the heart of Chiang-nan is Lake T'ai, with Wu-hsing to the southwest, I-hsing to the northwest, Wu-hsi to the north, and Soochow and Hua-t'ing (Shanghai) to the east. Soochow, situated on the Grand Canal midway between the Yangtze River and Hangchow, was the hub of the system of waterways that connected the cities of the region and historically the leading center of the area. It was described, in the late thirteenth century, by the Venetian visitor Marco Polo:

> The city is passing great, and has a circuit of some 60 miles; it hath merchants of great wealth and an incalculable number of people. Indeed, if the men of this city and of the rest of Manzi had but the spirit of soldiers they would conquer the world; but they are no [*sic*] soldiers at all, only accomplished traders and most skilful craftsmen. There are also in this city many philosophers and leeches, diligent students of nature.[12]

After the flooding of the Yellow River in 1344, which severely damaged the agricultural output of the central China plain, the Yüan government came to depend heavily on the rich southeast, especially Soochow and its neighboring prefectures.[13] In 1351, the government embarked on a ruthless drive to mobilize hundreds of thousands of peasants to repair the dikes. Insurrections broke out—led by rebels known as the Red Turbans, who wore red headgear





Map 5. The Chiang-nan Region, ca. 1350

symbolizing fire and light—fueled by the spread of a religious millennialism that preached the coming of the Buddha Maitreya at the fiery destruction of the world. By 1351, the general uprising had spread from Shantung in the north, southwest to the Yangtze, and through the Yangtze Valley, in Hupei and Hunan, cutting the Mongol Empire in two.

During the early 1350s, the Soochow area remained a haven from unrest. Hangchow, however, was sacked in 1352 by the marauding western wing of the Red Turbans. In 1353–54, a salt smuggler named Chang Shih-ch'eng seized three prefectures along the Grand Canal north of the Yangtze and proclaimed himself Emperor of the Great Chou, the ruler of the new dynasty. Attacked by the Mongol army from the north, Chang crossed the Yangtze in 1355, and in early 1356 seized Soochow, making it his new capital. Once in Soochow, Chang established an imperial-style bureaucracy and invited scholars of the region to join his government. Many responded immediately, and more followed in late 1357 and early 1358, when Chang legitimized himself by accepting a Yüan court appointment. After occupying Hangchow in 1358, Chang ruled the entire Chiang-nan region, the richest in the empire. In 1363, he again declared his independence from the Yüan government, calling himself the Prince of Wu. In the summer of 1365, Chu Yüan-chang, the future founder of the Ming dynasty, who had started his career as a member of the Red Turbans, began his campaign against Chang Shih-ch'eng. By the end of 1366, Chu's generals were at the gates of Soochow, and after a bitter ten-month siege the city was taken. Chang later committed suicide while a prisoner. In early 1368, Chu

Pl. 101a. Detail, pl. 101

Yüan-chang was proclaimed T'ai-tsu (r. 1368–98), the first emperor of the Ming dynasty.[14]

We may view the works of the late Yüan literati painters against this historical background. The modern scholar Wai-kam Ho has given a vivid picture of the life of the Chinese scholar under Mongol rule. The majority of Chiang-nan scholars in the fourteenth century, those who chose to pursue government careers; spent their lives frustrated in low-level clerical positions. Outside the court (except for those few born to the landed gentry, who enjoyed independent means), their career options ranged from teaching, writing, and painting to medicine, divination, and religion.[15]

During the late Yüan period, in the generation after Chao Meng-fu, there were four painters who, successfully turning Chao's calligraphic landscape style into highly individualistic expressions, came to be known as the Four Great Yüan Masters: Huang Kung-wang, Wu Chen, Ni Tsan, and Wang Meng. Huang Kung-wang (1269–1354), the first of the Four Masters, was born under the Southern Sung to a poor family in Ch'ang-shu, northeast of Soochow, but was raised in Wen-chou, Chekiang Province, by foster parents. A child prodigy, he is said to have studied under Chao Meng-fu. After serving many years as a government clerk, he was, in about 1315, implicated in legal violations by his superior and briefly sent to prison. In the early 1330s, he made his living as a professional fortune-teller and, wearing the Taoist cap and robe, he expounded on the Three Religions. In his last years, he retired to the Fu-ch'un Mountains, west of Hangchow, and died there in 1354.[16]

Of Huang's surviving works, the most famous is his masterpiece *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains* (fig. 183), dated 1350. In his essay on the theory of landscape painting, "Secrets of Landscape Painting," Huang observes that "painters of recent times mainly follow the two traditions of Tung Yüan and Li Ch'eng." "The brush methods of drawing trees and rocks of these two traditions are not alike," he notes, "and students must pay careful attention to the distinctions [between these two methods]."[17] Huang's realistically depicted pine trees follow in the tradition of Li Ch'eng (pl. 9). As in Chao Meng-fu's *Twin Pines, Level Distance* (pl. 101), which is also executed in the Li Ch'eng idiom, the complex crab-claw branches and the scaly pine bark are depicted in a calligraphic brushwork. In painting the mountain slopes, however, Huang adopts the hemp-fiber texture pattern of Tung Yüan (fig. 31).

> Tung Yüan's rock modeling is called the hemp-skin [hemp-fiber] texture pattern. [To make this pattern] one must first use a slanted brush to draw an outline at the foot of the slope, and then use texture strokes. Later, lighter strokes may be added to break into the deeply recessed areas. . . . The modeling should be moist and soft, with sandy ground below. [The ground] should be swept with light inkstrokes, curved lines, and repeating lighter strokes to break [the form].[18]

A close observer of nature, Huang draws realistic natural forms calligraphically. In painting rocks, he advises that one "begin with light inkstrokes,



Fig. 183. Huang Kung-wang (1269–1354). *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*, dated 1350. Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13 x 232 in. (32.9 x 589.2 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

so that alterations and revisions can be made, and then gradually build with darker ink. . . . In modeling, one should blur and blend individual brush-strokes." In the *Fu-ch'un* scroll, Tung Yüan's earlier, additive spatial organization is superseded by an integrated, unified ground plane that extends continuously from the front to the back.

> The mountain peaks should turn and link together, change direction and turn again, yet the "veins" of the mountains always follow through smoothly. This method makes the landscape come alive. The myriad peaks seem to bow and make way for each other, with ten thousand trees following along like a great army, grand and unopposed.[19]

Huang further suggests that landscape should be freely "written" rather than laboriously painted:

> In painting each tree, each rock, one should give rein to the ink and let it break free; in this way, the manner of the scholar will be achieved. If there is too much detailed description, the painting will fall into the class of artisan painting. . . . For the most part, as in writing characters, diligent practice leads to mastery.[20]

In the *Fu-ch'un* scroll, Huang transforms Tung Yüan's hemp-fiber pattern into a hemp "skin" of the mountain, whose rising and falling peaks follow dragon-like "veins," creating a new physicality and dynamism in his landscape painting.

Wu Chen (1280–1354), the second of the Four Great Masters, was a native of Chia-hsing, Chekiang Province, where he was born soon after the fall of the Southern Sung and where he lived most of his life (Map 5).[21] Wu admired the heroism of ancient wandering knights and was a fine swordsman in his youth, and later, like Huang Kung-wang, he mastered the art of divination in order to earn a living as a fortune-teller. A true recluse, he called his paintings "ink plays" (*mo-hsi*), works of which he disavowed any purpose except that of satisfying his own need for self-expression. Not surprisingly, he had neither commercial success nor renown as a painter during his lifetime.

In *Crooked Pine* (pl. 102), dated 1335, Wu Chen paints an ancient pine with a thick, knot-scarred trunk, its twisting, contorted branches reaching out as if in agony. At the lower left, the artist's inscription, executed in an exuberant cursive script, reads:

> In winter, the eleventh lunar month of the third year of the Yüan-t'ung reign era [December 1335], while visiting the Cloudy Grotto I saw a crooked and twisting ancient tree. So I wrote this picture to record what I saw. Mei-hua Tao-jen [the Plum-Blossom Taoist, Wu Chen] playing with ink.

The giant twisting branch of the tree (pl. 102b), pulling back toward the trunk and suddenly darting out like a dragon's claw, is a dramatic expression of both defiance and fortitude. Abandoning himself to intuition and feeling, Wu Chen draws the pine as if writing cursive calligraphy, in a bold, virtually unmodulated round brushwork. Chao Meng-fu's *Twin Pines* (pl. 101a), by comparison, is tame and academic. Interestingly, Wu made an error in recording the date of the painting. The Yüan-t'ung reign ended officially after its second year, in December 1334, and a new reign title, the later Chih-yüan, was proclaimed in January 1335. From 1328 to 1335, the Yüan court was plagued by bloody factionalism and five Yüan emperors assumed the throne (one of them occupied it twice). The reclusive Wu Chen, living in the mountains, evidently had not received the news of the latest change of reign.

Besides the familiar Neo-Confucian metaphor of the great pine as the virtuous gentleman, Wu's *Crooked Pine* also reflects the Taoist belief that the pine tree embodies the supernatural powers of the dragon, whose form it resembles. Like the dashing swordsman he once was, Wu Chen wields his brush as if possessed of superhuman energies. His *Pine Tree and Spring* (fig. 184), dated 1338, is inscribed with the artist's words:

> You may hang [my pine tree] high on a white wall in your hall;
> At midnight, it will fly away amidst the wind and clouds.

In *Central Mountain* (fig. 185), dated 1336, Wu Chen reduces the landscape to an iconic image of a host peak surrounded by guest peaks. By holding the brush tightly and perpendicular to the painting surface, he limits the brushwork to a few distinct stroke types that exhibit a characteristic thickness and bluntness. This round, blunt brush technique, expressive of the artist's direct, assertive personality, became the hallmark of the influential Wu Chen painting style.

Pl. 102. Wu Chen (1280–1354). *Crooked Pine*, dated 1335. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 65 3/8 x 32 3/8 in. (166 x 82.3 cm). Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1985 (1985.120.1)





Fig. 184. Wu Chen (1280–1354).
Pine Tree and Spring, dated 1338.
Hanging scroll, ink on paper,
41½ x 12½ in. (105.6 x 31.7 cm).
Nanjing Museum



Right and opposite page
Pls. 102a, b. Details, pl. 102





Fig. 185. Wu Chen (1280–1354). *Central Mountain*, dated 1336. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10⅜ x 35¾ in. (26.4 x 90.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

In the large hanging scroll *Clear River, Spring Dawn* (fig. 186), datable to the early 1340s, Wu attempts to re-create a monumental early Northern Sung composition attributed to Chü-jan (active ca. 960–80), the principal follower of Tung Yüan. Wu's parallel hemp-fiber texture strokes and round moss dots became the standard calligraphic formulation of the transmitted images of Tung Yüan and Chü-jan during and after the fourteenth century.

Wu Chen's much imitated, though never equaled, brush style is best illustrated in a small handscroll on paper, *Fisherman by a Wooded Bank* (pl. 103), datable to about 1345. The thick-line drawing, backed by flat ink washes, shows a pared-down style: the fisherman, briskly done in a few strokes and dots, is a marvel of abbreviation, while the rocks and trees, depicted with the same halting round blunt brushstrokes and clustered ink dots, bristle with energy and liveliness. On the right, the painter brushes in a poem in a brilliantly executed cursive script:

> Red leaves west of the village reflect evening rays,
> Yellow reeds on a sandy bank cast early moon shadows.
> Lightly stirring his oar,
> Thinking of returning home,
> He puts aside his fishing pole, and will catch no more.

As a symbol of reclusion, the leisurely fisherman was contrasted with the harassed official struggling to cope with the complexities of court life. Wu Chen's poem follows the rhyming pattern of the "Fisherman Songs," verses written by the eighth-century recluse fisherman Chang Tzu-ho, whose hermitage in the Hsi-sai Mountains was said to be the site of Li Chieh's *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Hsi-sai* (pl. 43).[22]

In Wu Chen's painting, all the descriptive elements in the poem—the evening rays and early moon, the reds and yellows of the leaves and reeds—have been left out, though they are fully projected through luminous blacks and subtle shades of gray. Wu's well-formulated brush idiom was immensely popular during the Ming dynasty, though in a copy of *Fisherman by a Wooded Bank* (fig. 187), by the Ming painter Yao Shou (1423–1495), the imitation of Wu's brushwork becomes flat and formulaic, devoid of the passion and spontaneity of the original.

Painters of many social strata flourished in the fourteenth century. The professional painter Sheng Mou (active ca. 1310–60), from Chia-hsing, Chekiang Province, worked in the Tung Yüan–Chü-jan idiom, the style favored by the scholar-official patrons in Chiang-nan. Sheng was a skillful painter, especially adept at creating large, colorful compositions. It is said that his popular success so upset his neighbor Wu Chen's envious wife that she urged him to change his painting style. "It will not be so after twenty years," was Wu's rejoinder, an opinion that was vindicated a century later.[13]

Sheng Mou's fan painting *Recluse Fisherman, Autumn Trees* (pl. 104), dated 1349, represents Sheng's narrative treatment of the popular theme of the fisherman-hermit. The brushwork follows the Tung–Chü hemp-fiber idiom, done with round brushstrokes and plump moss dots. The painting depicts a fisherman in the hat and gown of a Mongol official, which suggests that the fisherman is a portrait and the painting a commissioned work; his only companions are three wild geese, symbolic of his temporary freedom from government service. While the true fisherman "fished for fish and not for fame," the

Fig. 186. Wu Chen (1280–1354). *Clear River, Spring Dawn*, datable to the early 1340s. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 45⅛ x 39⅝ in. (114.7 x 100.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



Overleaf
Pl. 103. Wu Chen (1280–1354). *Fisherman by a Wooded Bank*, ca. 1345. Handscroll, ink on paper, 9¾ x 17 in. (24.8 x 43.2 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.33)





politician-fisherman merely bided his time fishing, waiting to return to court. The archetypal politician-fisherman was the eleventh-century B.C. recluse Chiang Tzu-ya, who, when he was discovered by the sage-king Wen fishing without a hook (to suggest that his thoughts were directed elsewhere), was recruited to serve as chief minister.

By the early 1350s, however, with increasing uprisings against the Mongols, few would have chosen to be called back to court. Sheng Mou painted *Recluse Fishing by Autumn Trees* (pl. 105), a small hanging scroll on paper, for his friend Chu-hsi in 1350. It shows a scholar wearing an ancient-style kerchief, angling with a pole that has no line. Two colophons, written after the fall of the Yüan, reflect a lingering nostalgia for a life in retreat during the early Ming. The earlier of the two, by Lin Yung (active ca. 1360s), reads:

> Across ten thousand *li* of wide waters, under a cloud-darkened sky,
> In the forest on the plain, in the sunset glowing upon red maple leaves,
> Yellow dust beats against the horses on their way to the capital;
> No one is as contented as the old angler sitting by the rocky shore.

The later colophon, written about 1400 by the celebrated early Ming landscape and bamboo painter Wang Fu (1362–1416), reads:

> The bustling crowds become daily more annoying;
> How can one stop such troublesome clamor?
> If my heart becomes quiet altogether,
> Perhaps I may clear away the source of this [confusion].
> Heaven is high and the Four Mountains are wrapped in silence,
> In the setting sun a solitary cloud fades away.
> Supreme laws of nature are present everywhere,
> In the urban marketplace as in the rural garden.



Fig. 187. Yao Shou (1423–1495). *Fisherman by a Wooded Bank, after Wu Chen*, from *Landscapes after Early Masters*, dated 1494. Leaf from an album of 18 paintings, ink and color on paper, 12¼ x 19 in. (31 x 48.3 cm). Shanghai Museum



Pl. 104. Sheng Mou (active ca. 1310–60). *Recluse Fisherman, Autumn Trees*, dated 1349. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 10 1/2 x 10 3/16 in. (27 x 25.8 cm). Purchase, Florence Waterbury Bequest and Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Cummings, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.13)

You, sir, have grasped this wonder and responded;
Though I have lost the memory of how to say it.[24]

The theme of the fisherman enjoyed continued popularity during the early Ming. Sheng Chu (active toward the end of the 14th century), a nephew of Sheng Mou, in *Angling in the Autumn River* (pl. 106), a fan datable to about 1370, continues in Sheng Mou's Tung–Chü hemp-fiber brush idiom (pl. 104), with round ink dots that create an overall surface pattern. The drawing is supple and relaxed, and again wild geese are the fisherman's only companions.

The youngest of the Four Great Masters, Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385), was a native of Wu-hsing and a grandson of Chao Meng-fu. Wang was educated



Pl. 105. Sheng Mou (active ca. 1310–60). *Recluse Fishing by Autumn Trees*, dated 1350. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 40⅜ x 13¼ in. (102.4 x 33.6 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.35)



Pl. 106. Sheng Chu (active toward end of 14th century). *Angling in the Autumn River*, ca. 1370. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink and light color on silk, 10⅛ x 10¾ in. (25.9 x 27.4 cm). Purchase, Bequest of Martha T. Fiske Collord, in memory of Josiah M. Fiske, Bequest of Mrs. Beekman Hoppin, and Gift of Herman Cooper, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.14)

as a poet and a painter, and he served for a time as a provincial prosecutor. In the 1340s, because of growing unrest in western Chekiang, Wang retired to the Yellow Crane Mountain, northeast of Hangchow, and there he took up the pen name Huang-ho-shan-ch'iao (Wood Gatherer of the Yellow Crane Mountain). After 1346, he spent much time traveling between Sung-chiang, Soochow, and Wu-hsi in Kiangsu, making the acquaintance of the famous poets and artists in the region. Following the installation of the Ming dynasty in 1368, Wang was appointed prefect of T'ai-an, Shantung Province, but by 1371, he was back in the capital, Nanking. In 1380, he was implicated in the alleged treason of the prime minister Hu Wei-yung. Thousands were executed, and Wang Meng was incarcerated. He died in prison in 1385.[25]

Wang Meng's *Sparse Trees and Pavilion* (pl. 107), a silk fan painting datable to the late 1350s, is dedicated to the Soochow recluse scholar Ch'en





Pl. 107. Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385). *Sparse Trees and Pavilion*, ca. late 1350s. Fan mounted as an album leaf, ink on silk, 9⅞ x 11⅛ in. (25.2 x 28.3 cm). From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Gift of Jack C. Tang and Oscar L. Tang, 1991 (1991.438.1)

Ju-chih (*tzu*, Wei-yin; 1329–1385). In the accompanying poem, the painter describes his own life as a recluse:

> In the quiet of the empty forest, the leaves dance.
> The thatched pavilion stands alone under the noonday sun.
> In the south wind, green waves ripple all the day.
> Wearing a gauze cap and coarse hemp, I feel no summer heat.
> My wilderness home is near the Yellow Crane Peak.
> By evening I go to the empty grotto, to listen to the mountain rain.

Under tall, sparse trees, a lonely recluse is shown sitting in a pavilion by the shore. Compared with Ma Yüan's meditating scholar in *Viewing Plum Blossoms by Moonlight* (pl. 50), Wang Meng's image reflects political upheaval. Using a round seal-script-style brushstroke, Wang Meng creates an ethereal yet vibrant dreamlike space. His self-portrait recalls Ni Tsan's image of himself in *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove* (pl. 116). Both Ni's and Wang's depictions of the scholar in retreat echo Ch'ien Hsüan's representation of Wang Hsi-chih watching geese from his pavilion (pl. 71), which, in turn, harks back to the T'ang artist Lu Hung's recluse in a thatched hut (fig. 28). During the second half of the fourteenth century, the scholar, living on the edge of moral and social collapse, was sustained only by his faith in nature and in the Confucian virtue ethic. Wang Meng's painting of a figure in a pavilion under autumnal trees listening to the mountain rain symbolizes adherence to the traditional Confucian code, the way of life followed by the literati painters.

As disorder erupted in western Chekiang in the late 1340s, many scholars began an exodus to the east of Lake T'ai. There they were welcomed at the homes of their wealthy friends. In *Greeting Friends at the Pine Pavilion* (fig. 188), dated 1347, by Wang Yüan (ca. 1280–after 1349), visitors arrive at a pavilion by boat. The gathering of scholars and friends inevitably recalls famous literary gatherings of earlier times. In 1348, for example, the scholar and poet Yang Wei-chen wrote an essay entitled "Elegant Gathering at Jade Mountain," which records an event that took place at the estate of Ku Te-hui. Yang compared the event with both Wang Hsi-chih's gathering at the Orchid Pavilion in A.D. 353 and with the late Northern Sung gathering of scholars and artists at Wang Shen's Western Garden in 1087.[26] In 1365, Wang Meng commemorated another gathering of literati notables at the Rain-Listening Pavilion of Lu Shih-heng (*tzu*, Shan-fu), near Soochow, by painting a handscroll on which all those present, including Ni Tsan, inscribed poems.[27]

In *Dwelling in the Ch'ing-pien Mountains* (fig. 189), dated 1366 and probably painted for his cousin Chao Lin, Wang Meng presents the Chao family estate near Wu-hsing.[28] In 1366, the Wu-hsing area was in the midst of warfare between forces of Chu Yüan-chang and his chief rival, Chang Shih-ch'eng. Wang Meng's painting of the scholar's home is not an ideal representation of a peaceful retreat but a landscape of complexity and turmoil. Stylistically, Wang here resurrects the monumental mountain format of the Northern Sung.[29] Having had more exposure to the old masters and being more concerned with de-



Fig. 188. Wang Yüan (ca. 1280–after 1349). *Greeting Friends at the Pine Pavilion*, dated 1347. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 34¼ x 19⅜ in. (86.9 x 49.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

scriptive techniques than either Huang Kung-wang or Wu Chen, Wang Meng came close to defining a new representational style for late Yüan and Ming landscape painting.

Red Cliffs and Green Valleys (pl. 108), datable to about 1367, when the struggle between Chu's and Chang's forces was nearing its climactic end, depicts Wang Meng sitting by a riverbank under trees. His poem, in the upper right corner of the painting, reads:

> Far away, among a hundred thousand blue mountains,
> Vermilion cliffs and green valleys, deep and impenetrable.
> The wind through pine trees brings the sound of a waterfall from the
> edge of the sky;





The scent of flowers emerges from the cave, pervading the clouds.
When did the fishing boat bring me here?
Where shall I meet the hermits of the Ch'in?
Springtime is brief and flowers fall.
Only the river flows, eastward, year after year.

Two references in the poem may be noted. The cave indicates a place of retreat, a term used by Taoist recluses.[10] The hermits of the Ch'in bring to mind a reference in *Peach Blossom Spring*, by the early fifth-century poet T'ao

Fig. 189. Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385). *Dwelling in the Ch'ing-pien Mountains*, dated 1366. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 55⅜ x 16⅝ in. (140.6 x 42.2 cm). Shanghai Museum

Fig. 190. Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385). *Recluse Angling on a Flowering Stream.* Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 50¾ x 23 in. (129 x 58.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



Pl. 108. Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385). *Red Cliffs and Green Valleys*, ca. 1367. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 26¾ x 13½ in. (68 x 34.3 cm). Purchase, Gift of Darius Ogden Mills and Gift of Mrs. Robert Young, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.7)



Pl. 109. Chao Yüan (active ca. 1350–75). *Landscape in the Style of Yen Wen-kuei and Fan K'uan*, ca. 1370. Handscroll, ink on paper, 9¾ x 31⅛ in. (24.9 x 79 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1981 (1981.285.15)

Ch'ien, in which, during the T'ai-yüan era (A.D. 376–96), a fisherman loses his way and finds himself in the land of peach blossoms. There he meets villagers whose ancestors had settled there after having escaped during the tumultuous years of the Ch'in dynasty (221–206 B.C.) and who have lost all sense of time. Thus, thematically, *Red Cliffs and Green Valleys* is closely related to Wang Meng's *Recluse Angling on a Flowering Stream*, also datable to 1367 (fig. 190).[31] Wang Meng, in the final months of the siege of Soochow by the forces of Chu Yüan-chang, was himself in a kind of time warp, hiding in the mountains to wait out the war.

In *Red Cliffs and Green Valleys*, the recluse, seated in rituallike solemnity, listens to the sound of a waterfall. The tense, quivering brushstrokes of the figures are echoed by the tremulous lines of the rocks and trees. The firmly centered round brushwork is done with the tucked-in tip of the brush, as in archaic seal-script writing, and tadpolelike brushstrokes enliven the rocks. The painting is a timeless image of an aging man who watches the flowing river, contemplating the passage of time.

A younger contemporary of Wang Meng, Chao Yüan (active ca. 1350–75), a professional painter active in the Soochow area, was ranked by his admirers



as the equal of the master. In *Landscape in the Style of Yen Wen-kuei and Fan K'uan* (pl. 109), a short handscroll on paper datable to about 1370, Chao attempts to re-create the monumental landscape style of the early Northern Sung. The composition, a succession of four mountain peaks, was inspired by *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains* (pl. 15), after Yen Wen-kuei, which was at that time well known to Soochow painters.[32] Trees in the background are seen through those in the foreground, and there is a physically integrated, receding ground plane. While the second and third peaks, one diagonally receding and the other a massive central form, are modeled after Yen Wen-kuei and Fan K'uan (fig. 30), the peak at the far left, an eruptive form with billowing contours, echoes the devil-face mountains of Li Ch'eng and Kuo Hsi (pl. 11) and shows brushstrokes and dots that revolve as if caught in a whirlwind.

In combining the idioms of Yen Wen-kuei, Fan K'uan, and Li Ch'eng–Kuo Hsi in one composition, Chao Yüan rejects the advice of Huang Kung-wang to "pay careful attention to the distinctions between [the ancient brush methods]." Instead, Chao unites the different mountain forms and texture patterns with a centered calligraphic brushwork, creating a congruent surface structure.



Pl. 110. Chao Yüan (active ca. 1350–75). *Farewell by a Stream on a Clear Day*, ca. early 1370s. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 37¼ x 13¾ in. (94.6 x 34.9 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.8)

Pl. 110a. Detail, pl. 110





Pl. 111. Chang Yü (1333–1385). *Spring Clouds at the Pine Studio*, dated 1366. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 36 3/8 x 12 3/8 in. (111 x 31.5 cm). Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1980 (1980.426.3)



Fig. 191. Unidentified artist (14th century). Formerly attributed to Mi Fu (1052–1107). *Spring Mountains and Pines.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 13¾ x 17⅜ in. (35 x 44.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Chao Yüan's *Farewell by a Stream on a Clear Day* (pl. 110), datable to the early 1370s, shows friends parting before a river journey under an imposing mountain peak. In a manner similar to that of Wang Meng (fig. 190), Chao displays an extraordinary control of texture and tonality, transforming Wang's powerfully expressive brushwork into vivacious surface pattern. The figural groups in the foreground, done in pale ink and soft round brushstrokes, are beautifully evocative. The reeds, wave patterns, and windblown trees, echoing human gesture, infuse the landscape with emotion.

After the installation of the Ming dynasty, Chao Yüan was summoned, in 1368, to Nanking to serve as a court painter. His career, however, like those of many other notable Chiang-nan painters, was cut short by the capricious and vengeful first Ming emperor, T'ai-tsu, who was deeply suspicious of the independent and often arrogant Soochow scholars and artists. Taking offense at something Chao had painted, the emperor had him executed.

Another late Yüan literati artist who died in the early Ming was the poet, calligrapher, and painter Chang Yü (1333–1385). Known as one of the Four Talents of Soochow—the others being Kao Ch'i, Hsü Pen, and Yang Chi—Chang Yü accepted an appointment in 1371 to serve at the Ming court. Despite his loyal attendance, his earlier association with a political rival, Chang Shih-ch'eng, made him suspect, and he was eventually driven to suicide. Chang Yü's only surviving painting, *Spring Clouds at the Pine Studio* (pl. 111), dated 1366, shows a scholar's thatched studio, hidden in a pine grove by a stream. Chang's descriptive realism relates his style to the more conservative

manner of the early Yüan. Painted in the horizontal black and blue-green Mi-dot idiom, it recalls *Spring Mountains and Pines* (fig. 191), a Yüan work formerly attributed to Mi Fu, for whom the technique is named. The poet's lyrical sentiments are expressed through the subtle use of ink wash and pale colors and the suggestion of dense clouds clearing after a spring shower.

The Literary Taoists

The political influence of the Taoist church began under the Mongols in the 1220s, when the Taoist master Ch'iu Ch'u-chi, renowned for his magical powers of divination and fortune-telling, was invited by Chingghis Khan to his court in Central Asia.[33] In 1276, the year the Southern Sung capital, Lin-an, fell to the Mongols, Khubilai Khan summoned the southern Taoist prelate Chang Tsung-yen, the thirty-sixth Celestial Master of Dragon-Tiger Mountain, to the Yüan capital to be his adviser. Chang's disciple Chang Liu-sun was placed, in 1295, in charge of the Taoist church in the south. Chang Liu-sun and his successors at the Mongol court effectively served as liaisons between the Mongols and the southern Chinese.[34]

There were two schools of religious Taoists in the south. The elixir masters were itinerant magicians who practiced divination, rainmaking, and alchemy. The literary Taoists, men of intellectual achievement and great influence, combined Neo-Taoist metaphysical thought with Confucian learning. As friends and companions of leading scholars and artists, they infused the Chiang-nan literati culture with Taoist mysticism, which served as the underlying philosophy for reclusive living. Several literary Taoists were also accomplished painters.

Bamboo and Rock (pl. 112), datable to about 1360, is by the leading late Yüan literary Taoist Teng Yü (ca. 1300–after 1378), recently identified as the early Ming Taoist prelate Teng Chung-hsiu.[35] Born in Lin-ch'uan, Kiangsi Province, Teng Yü joined a Taoist temple at Dragon-Tiger Mountain at age twelve and practiced alchemy and rainmaking. About 1360, he served as superintendent of the Taoist temple Hsüan-miao-kuan in Wen-chou, near the Chekiang coast.[36] After the establishment of the Ming, in 1371, the forty-second Celestial Master was summoned to the capital, and Teng Yü, now known as Teng Chung-hsiu, accompanied him as his principal aide. Taking up residence in the official Taoist temple in Nanking, Teng repeatedly performed miracles of rainmaking. In 1377, he represented the emperor in Kuei-chi, Chekiang, and conducted ritual sacrifices to the legendary Emperor Yü and at the tombs of two of the Southern Sung emperors, Hsiao-tsung and Li-tsung, after which he retired to Dragon-Tiger Mountain.

Bamboo and Rock is executed according to the precepts of Chao Meng-fu. The bamboo leaves are done in clerical script; the stalks in seal script; and the rocks, drawn in mixed ink tones, simulate the flying-white style. Two stalks of bamboo, symbolizing the Confucian virtues of righteousness and humility, with luxuriantly spreading leaves, grow tall and straight from an outcropping



Pl. 112. Teng Yü (ca. 1300–after 1378). *Bamboo and Rock*, ca. 1360. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 53 x $16\frac{5}{8}$ in. (134.6 x 42.2 cm). From the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Gift of Jack C. Tang and Oscar L. Tang, 1991 (1991.438.1)



of rocks. Above the bamboo, a poem inscribed by Liu Jen-pen (died 1367), the governor-general of Wen-chou under the rebel leader Fang Kuo-chen, reads:

> After fog and rain, in Chiang-nan,
> Few friends of integrity remain.
> As autumn fills the shores of the Hsiao and Hsiang rivers,
> Clouds paint the bamboo a deep green.

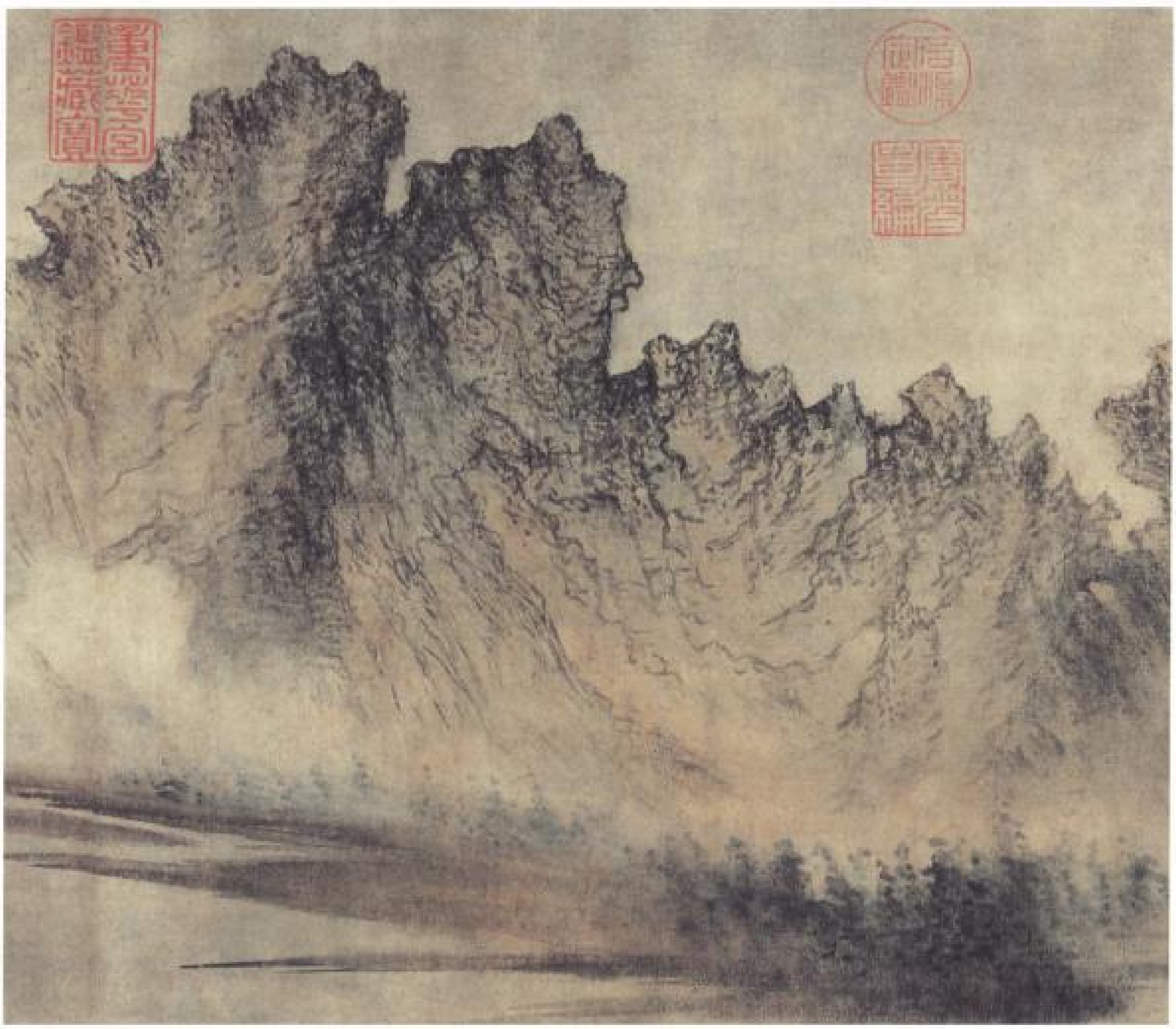
Pl. 113. Fang Ts'ung-i (ca. 1301–after 1378). *Cloudy Mountains*, ca. 1360s. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 10¼ x 56⅞ in. (26.1 x 144.5 cm). Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973 (1973.121.4)

Fang Ts'ung-i (ca. 1301–after 1378), one of Teng Yü's fellow Taoist clerics from Dragon-Tiger Mountain, went to Peking after 1336, apparently with political ambitions. Failing to make an impression at the Yüan court, he consoled himself by visiting the famous T'ai-hang Mountains and viewing collections of ancient paintings.[37] In *Cloudy Mountains* (pl. 113), datable to the late 1360s, Fang combines Fan K'uan's raindrop texture pattern with round Mi-dots and wet ink wash, transforming Fan's tactile, barefaced rocky landscape of the north (fig. 30) into a mist-filled, visionary landscape of the south. It is possible that Fang had seen *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains*, attributed to Yen Wen-kuei (pl. 15), as his angular mountain contours and stacked, interlocking mountains suggest that he was inspired by such a model. Fang's landscape, constantly in flux, which reflects the Taoist view of nature as a coalescence of the amorphous *ch'i* ("breath"), is a metaphor of the interaction between yin and yang: ink against paper, vapor and water against mountain, movement against inertia. The vision of the dragonlike mountain, first levitating then flying off in a gust of wind, gives form to nature's elemental forces.

Spring Dawn over the Elixir Terrace (pl. 114), by Lu Kuang (ca. 1300–after 1371), depicts a Taoist temple at daybreak, nestled in a mountain ravine.[38] Lu Kuang fled his native Soochow in the late 1350s. He painted *Spring Dawn* in about 1369 for his Taoist friend Po-yung after he returned to the Lake T'ai area. The painting celebrates the installation of the Ming dynasty, and is inscribed with a poem composed by the artist:

Pl. 113a. Detail, pl. 113







Pl. 114. Lu Kuang (ca. 1300–after 1371). *Spring Dawn over the Elixir Terrace*, ca. 1369. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 24⅛ x 10¼ in. (61.3 x 26 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.2.2)

For ten years I wandered, homeless and far from the troubled world.
Now, returning by the river, I see the world anew.
Jadelike vapors float in the sky; it is spring but there is no rain.
Rising up from a well at dawn, elixir rays are transformed into clouds.
Standing in the wind I lean on my dragon staff.
Long have I missed your playing of the mouth organ in moonlight.
I am happy to be with you, the venerable immortal, away from the
military strategists.
We sit, looking at paintings and discussing literature.

In 1369, Lu Kuang inscribed the landscape handscroll *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains* (pl. 15), attributed to the early Northern Sung master Yen Wen-kuei, which he described as depicting "elixir terraces and jade palaces." *Spring Dawn over the Elixir Terrace*, which shows overlapping vertical peaks, is inspired by the ruggedly stylized forms of the central section of that handscroll.[39] A vertical hanging scroll, the composition re-creates what the Northern Sung painter Kuo Hsi called the high-distance scheme, and in fact it resembles Kuo's masterpiece of 1072, *Early Spring* (fig. 32).

Dragon Pine (pl. 115), datable to about 1400, is by Wu Po-li (active late 14th–early 15th century), a disciple of Fang Ts'ung-i, who served as the superintendent of the Upper Purity Temple on Dragon-Tiger Mountain in the early years of the Yung-lo era (1403–24).[40] This mysterious and powerful painting bears an inscription by Chang Yü-ch'u (1361–1410), the forty-third Celestial Master. The intense animation of the tree recalls a description by the tenth-century landscape master Ching Hao: "Among the trees, one had grown to occupy a huge area by itself. Its aged bark was covered with green lichen. It looked as if it were a flying dragon riding the sky, or as if it were a coiling dragon aiming at reaching the Milky Way."[41] Close to the roots of the dragon pine is a spring-fed pool—no doubt the auspicious dragon cavity of Taoist geomantic belief.[42] The writhing, surging, serpentlike tree, its branches like grasping claws, is depicted in a soft, dense brushwork that bristles with energy and creates a lively texture that heightens the impression of a living being.

Ni Tsan, the Noble Recluse

Ni Tsan (1301–1374), the third of the Four Great Masters, was the prototypical late Yüan literati painter. More than anyone else of his time, Ni Tsan successfully melded poetry, calligraphy, and painting into an expressive unity, bringing to Yüan painting a fresh complexity and sophistication.

Born in 1301 to a wealthy landowning family in Wu-hsi, on the northeastern shore of Lake T'ai, Ni Tsan enjoyed a life of luxury and ease at his family estate through the 1330s and the mid-1340s. After natural disasters in the north in the 1340s virtually destroyed the agricultural production of the central China plain, the Yüan government imposed a heavy tax on the wealthy families in the Chiang-nan region. Through a policy of "collecting grain tax by



Pl. 115. Wu Po-li (active late 14th–early 15th century). *Dragon Pine*, inscribed by Chang Yü-ch'u (1361–1410). Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 47⅝ x 13³⁄₁₆ in. (120.9 x 33.5 cm). Edward Elliott Family Collection, Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1984 (1984.475.3)

awarding rank," the officials coerced the landowners to accept titles and then to make payments on the basis of rank. To evade the tax collectors, Ni Tsan left home and roamed the lake region between Wu-hsi and Soochow. For about ten years, from 1356 to 1366, he and his family lived in the water country of Mao Lake and the Sung River. After the establishment of the Ming in 1368, Ni Tsan wandered throughout the Chiang-nan area, finally returning to Wu-hsi in 1374. He died there in December 1374.[43]

Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove (pl. 116), dated 1339, shows Ni Tsan attended by a servant and gazing out at the far shore from a thatched pavilion on a riverbank. In the upper left corner, Ni Tsan's colophon (pl. 116a) begins with a prefatory note:

> After I made this picture of enjoying the wilderness in an autumn grove for Hsiao-shan in the ninth month, he brought it back to ask me for an inscription. It happened that on the fifteenth of last month, I was passing the Tilling Studio and the cassia tree in front of it was in full bloom. I was inspired to compose the following poem:
>
> How delightful is autumn, my inkstone and mat feel cool.
> With bamboo shades rolled up, a light dew softens my robe.
> Forest gates and cave windows send forth new pleasures,
> Green rain and yellow mist envelop distant bedrock.
> Scattered bamboos wave in the bright sun,
> The shadows of fir parasols lie beneath the moonlight.
> I burn my incense in a gilded duck censer,
> And collect fallen petals in a pouch by my pillow.

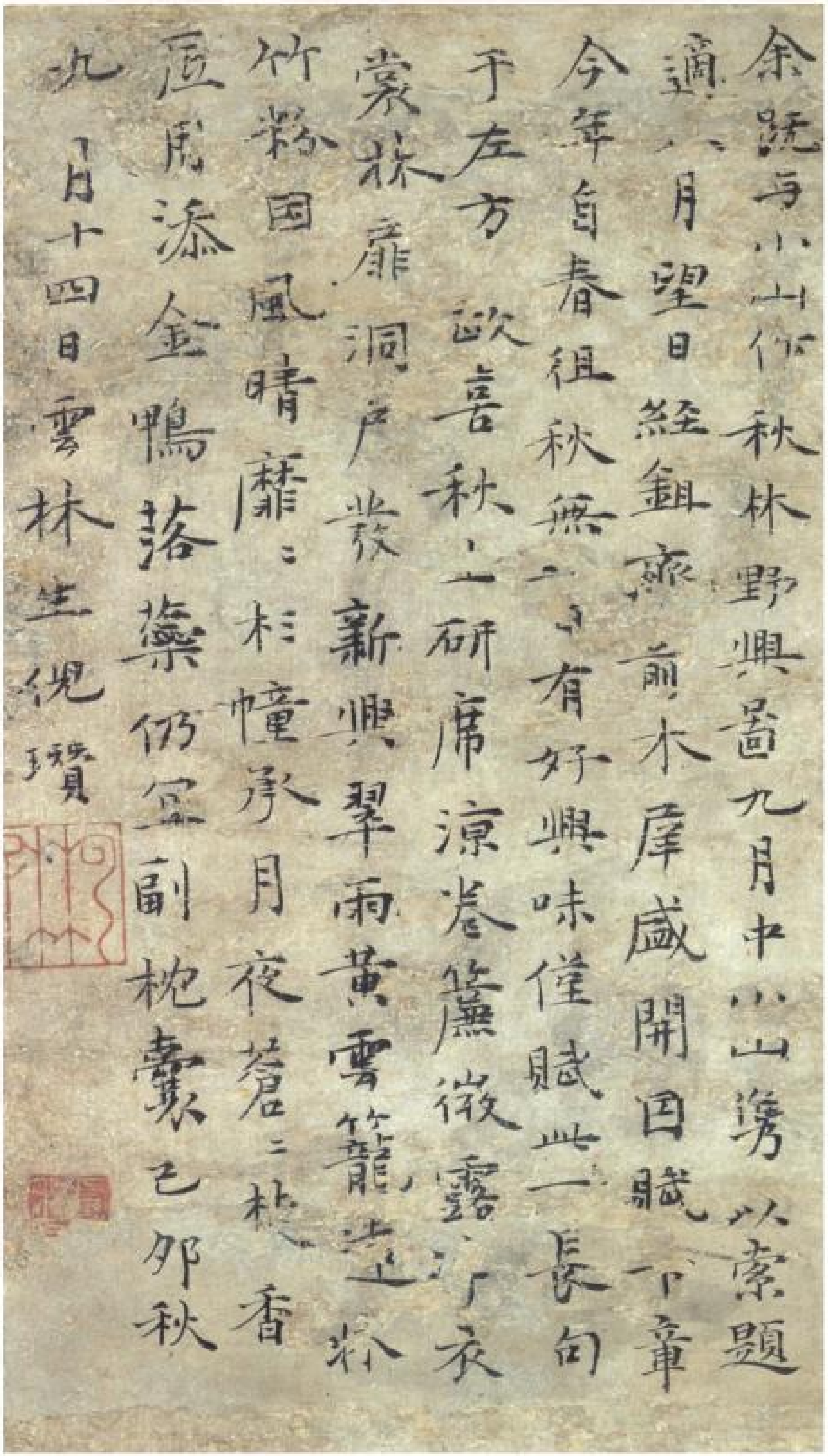
Painted in Tung Yüan's earthen landscape idiom of soft rolling hills in a hemp-fiber texture pattern, Ni's composition is based on Tung's *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (fig. 31). A similar composition by Ni, *Thatched Cottage at Eastern Ridge*, dated 1338, is now preserved in a copy by the late Ming painter Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636; fig. 192).[44] Ni's inscription, transcribed by Tung, reads:

> Hsi-hsien visited me at [Yün-]lin and spoke of the scenic beauty of his home, the thatched cottage at Eastern Ridge. So I imagined it and painted this.

In both compositions, Ni Tsan shows the scholar's pavilion retreat as the focal point of the landscape. In his fully developed style, figures would be absent from the landscape, leaving only an empty pavilion under trees or simply sparse trees and rocks.

Painted when he was in his late thirties, *Enjoying the Wilderness* shows Ni Tsan in privileged surroundings. His comfortable life-style is reflected also in the elegant accoutrements of his scholarly studio, as mentioned in his poem: the inkstone and sitting mat cool to the touch, the gilded incense burner, and the scented pouch filled with flower petals. A portrait of Ni Tsan (fig. 193), painted about 1340 by an unidentified artist, shows the painter as something of





Pl. 116. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove*, dated 1339. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 38⅛ x 27 in. (97 x 68.5 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.38)

Pl. 116a. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Detail from the artist's inscription, dated 1339, on *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove* (pl. 116)



Fig. 192. Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636). *Thatched Cottage at Eastern Ridge.* Copy of a painting by Ni Tsan dated 1338. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, $34\frac{3}{8} \times 25\frac{5}{8}$ in. (87.4 x 65 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

a dandy. Dressed immaculately in white linen and flanked by two attendants, one holding a duster and the other carrying washing implements, he sits on a daybed surrounded by a painted screen, scrolls, an inkstone, and several antique objects.

Contemporary biographers described Ni Tsan as a rich eccentric, overly fastidious and obsessed with cleanliness. In addition to his private library and studio, which he named the Pure and Secluded Pavilion, his garden villa included the Cloudy Forest Hall, the Pavilion of Leisurely Immortals, the Vermilion Sun Guest House, the Cave of Snowy Cranes, and the Pavilion of Mi Fu's Calligraphy and Painting. According to one writer,

> The Pure and Secluded Pavilion was covered with blue carpets and was equipped with a hundred pairs of rope slippers, so that guests could change into them before entering. . . . The Cave of Snowy Cranes was

covered with white carpets. . . . In front of these buildings were planted flowers of many different colors, and the flower beds were lined with white glazed tiles. When the flowers were watered, the fallen petals were picked up with a long bamboo pole so that the beds would not be dirtied by footprints.[45]

In his earlier painting, Ni Tsan followed Huang Kung-wang's admonition that a painter "should carry his brushes in a leather satchel . . . to draw and record [from nature]."[46] To a friend he wrote:

When I first learned to use a brush,
Seeing an object I tried to capture its likeness.
Whenever I traveled, in country or in town,
I sketched object after object, keeping the sketches in my painting [basket].
I ask my [Buddhist] master Fang Yai,
What is illusion? What is reality?
From the inkwell I take some ink drops,
To lodge in my painting the boundless feeling of spring.[47]

Enjoying the Wilderness shows heavily modeled trees and rocks, but the painting on the whole is labored and does not successfully convey a "boundless feeling of spring." Ni Tsan at this point has not yet come into his own as a painter, though the calligraphy on the painting is already of great interest.

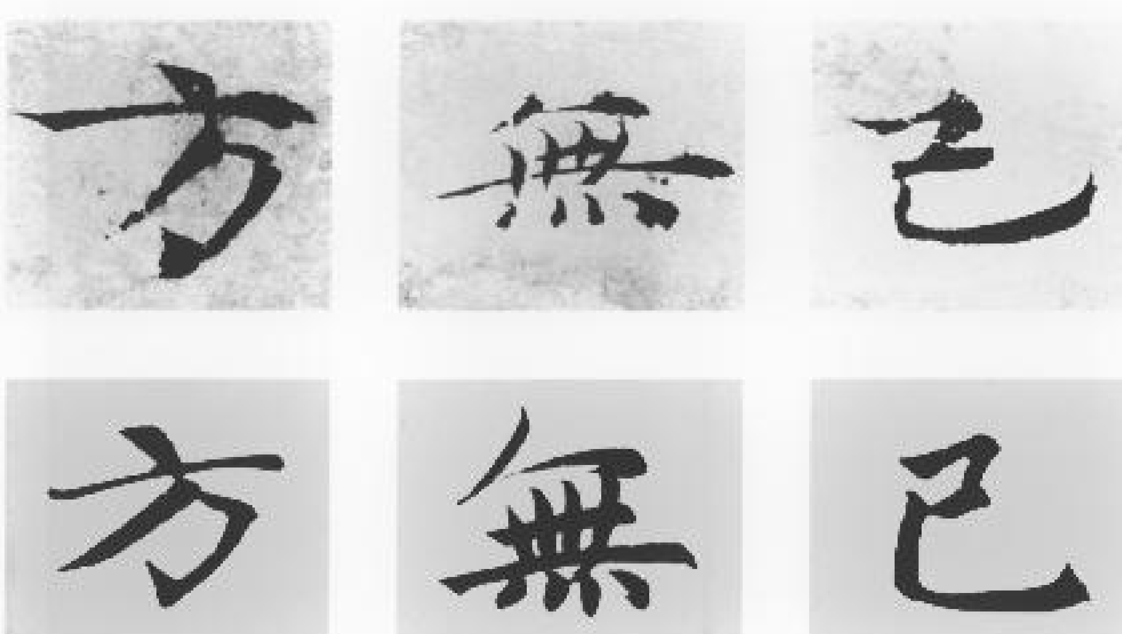
During the fourteenth century, most artists of Ni's generation grew up under the influence of Chao Meng-fu. But as a countrified recluse, Ni Tsan could no more write in Chao's elegant official regular script (fig. 175) than serve at court in Chao's formal robes. Instead, Ni emulated Chung Yu (151–230), the Wei dynasty master who developed the archaic clerical form of the Han period into an informal regular script. A famous work attributed to



Fig. 193. Unidentified artist (mid-14th century). *Portrait of Ni Tsan*, ca. 1340. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11⅛ x 24 in. (28.2 x 60.9 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Chung Yu, *Memorial Recommending Chi-chih* (figs. 56, 57), then in the collection of Lu Hsing-chih, a close friend of Ni, became Ni's model. Chung's loose, open forms, done in a simple, unmodulated brushstroke, influenced Ni in his cultivation of a naïve and rustic manner.

Ni Tsan's first colophon inscribed on *Enjoying the Wilderness* (pl. 116a) reflects the influence of Chao Meng-fu in the characters *fang*, *wu*, and *chi* (fig. 194a). Ni successfully loosens up Chao's forms (fig. 194b), however, by introducing a horizontal clerical influence into his characters. In the character *chi*, for example, while he keeps Chao's tightly knit regular-script element at the top, he uses the clerical flaring *na* ending for the bottom stroke, thereby making the character appear "simple and natural." In affecting an archaic manner in his writing, Ni Tsan combines the archaic clerical and the modern regular modes. Instead of the perfectly articulated regular-script brushwork practiced by Chao Meng-fu, Ni uses the simple clerical technique of pressing down and lifting the brush: the horizontal stroke touches down lightly on the left, broadens smoothly to the right, and ends abruptly as a truncated *na* stroke. Structurally, the clerical and the regular modes are fundamentally different: whereas the symmetrical clerical form is made of straight horizontals and verticals, the elegant T'ang-style regular script shows slanted horizontals, with intricately balanced, almost organically fitted parts. Ni Tsan purposely exploits their inherent structural contradictions, creating a style that is at once awkward and sophisticated. Every one of Ni's characters, with its slanted horizontals and tilting verticals, seems unstable yet balanced. In the character *mu* (fig. 195a), for example, the vertical is placed to the right of the horizontal stroke, thus accentuating the character's tilt to the left, yet the two diagonal strokes, spreading out evenly in the clerical mode, calmly hold up the leaning central element. In the character *chin* (fig. 195b), the openness of the spreading form on the top and the long horizontal at the bottom, comfortably carried out in the clerical mode, is deliberately contrasted with the closely wound element in the center, in the regular mode. Another form of contrast is seen in



Figs. 194a, b. The characters *fang*, *wu*, and *chi*

a. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Details from *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove* (pl. 116)

b. Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). Details from *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery* (fig. 175)



Figs. 195a–d. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Details from *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove* (pl. 116)

a. The character *mu* b. The character *chin* c. The character *lien* d. The character *fei*

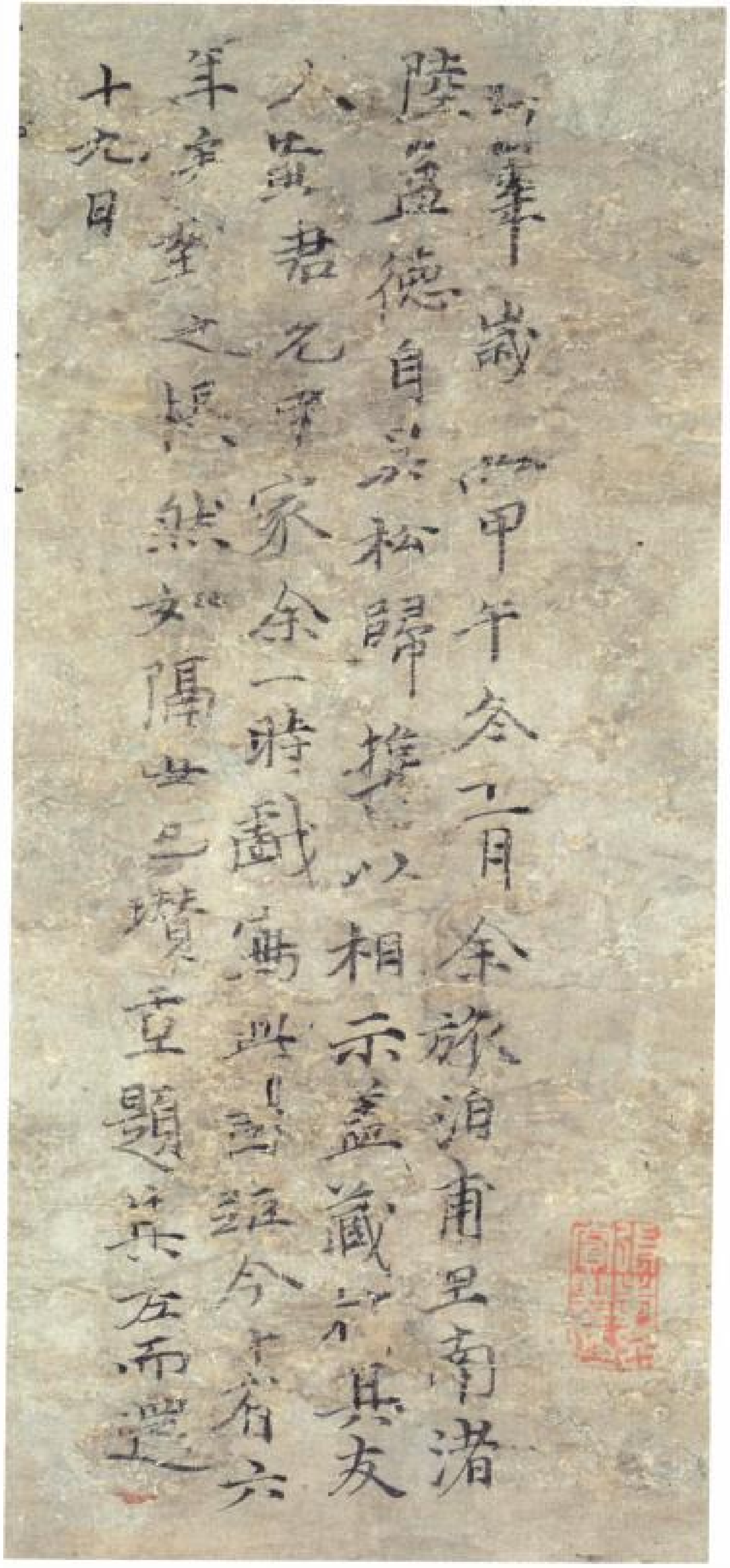
the characters *lien* and *fei* (figs. 195c, d), where a tightly organized regular element is tucked under the more open clerical structure that covers it.

By the late 1340s, because of natural disasters in the north and increasing tax burdens in the Chiang-nan area, Ni Tsan's peaceful days at the Pure and Secluded Pavilion had ended. He started selling off and giving away family properties, and increasingly spent time away from Wu-hsi. Ni painted *The Six Gentlemen* (fig. 196) in the late spring of 1345, when he was sailing near Soochow. Arriving one night at the home of his friend Lu Heng, he found several other distinguished guests already present. Although weary from the journey, he agreed to paint for his host. The painting shows Ni's favorite image. Here, the clustered trees, silhouetted against a deserted riverbank, symbolize kindred friends isolated by the disintegration of late Yüan society. The style of Ni's work, painted in homage to Huang Kung-wang, who was present that evening at Lu Heng's, resembles that of Huang (fig. 183) in its loosely directed texture strokes, which build, layer upon layer, until the forms emerge.

In early 1352, Ni Tsan left his home. Loading his worldly possessions onto a houseboat, he sailed along the rivers and lakes, stopping at the homes of friends along the way. A second inscription on *Enjoying the Wilderness* (pl. 116b), written by the artist in 1354, more than fifteen years after the work was painted, appears to the right of the first colophon:

> In the fourteenth year [of the Chih-cheng reign era], the *chia-wu* year [1354], in the eleventh month, I stopped on my travels at the south bank of Fu-li. Lu Meng-te, arriving from Wu-sung, brought this to show me; it has been kept by the family of his friend Mr. Huang Yün-chung. I had once casually made this picture, and sixteen years have since passed! Looking at it I feel lost, as if seeing myself in another life. I inscribed it again on the left, and returned it. [Written on] the nineteenth day [December 3, 1354].

The calligraphic style of the second inscription graphically expresses the artist's mental state, which is that of a harassed fugitive. The writing appears nervous and constricted. Compared with the smooth and elegant forms of the first colophon (pl. 116a), the horizontals and verticals are no longer at right angles and the decorous clerical elements are all but overwhelmed by the tilting regular elements. The brushwork is taut and bony, and each stroke begins and ends with a sharp reverse motion in the form of a hook. The lopsided characters, leaning to one side, barely conform to the writing column.



Pl. 116b. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Detail from the artist's inscription, dated 1354, on *Enjoying the Wilderness in an Autumn Grove* (pl. 116)





Fig. 196. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *The Six Gentlemen*, dated 1345. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 24 3/8 x 13 1/8 in. (61.9 x 33.3 cm). Shanghai Museum

Fig. 197. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *Empty Pavilion in a Pine Grove*, dated 1354. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 32 7/8 x 20 7/8 in. (83.4 x 52.9 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

In *Empty Pavilion in a Pine Grove* (fig. 197), dated 1354, Ni Tsan paints an empty pavilion to represent his abandoned home. He writes a poem in the upper left, again in a tense, nervous hand:

> The pavilion stands under a tall pine tree;
> The recluse has departed after nightfall.
> When the morning comes, he shall return
> To dry his freshly washed hair in the rising sun.

On the right side of the painting, echoing Ni's sentiment, is a colophon signed by one P'an Ch'un:

> In the mountain there is an old thatched house,
> Seeing it makes him think of returning home.
> Above all, he loves the tall pine tree,
> But the morning sun has not yet risen.

Thus Ni Tsan establishes this composition of trees by the lakeshore as a symbol of himself and his world. He repeated this composition over and over, creating serial images as a kind of journal in which he recorded his thoughts and impressions.

Throughout his difficult life, Ni Tsan amused and sustained himself by writing verse. A good poet, according to Ni, "never wastes a single sentence without saying something meaningful, never devotes himself to decoration alone." Good poetry "is like silk, hemp, and grain, which are useful in the world, not like carved ice sculpture or fancily embossed paper, which are merely wasted effort." In his poetry, Ni Tsan emulated T'ao Ch'ien (365–427) and Tu Fu (712–770). T'ao's nature poetry exemplified for Ni a "harmonious, light, and peaceful" quality that captured "the moral aspect of man's nature and emotions," while Tu's realism, "inspired by world affairs, [was] patriotic, righteous, and passionate."[48] For Ni, it was this moral aspect (*cheng*) in man's nature and emotions that, when released, restored to him a sense of rapture and joy in existence.

Composing in both the ancient (*ku*) and the "regulated" (*lü*) styles, Ni Tsan wrote mostly short poems, especially in the quatrain form, in lines of either five or seven words. The poems are about friendship, love, and loss, and many are inscribed on paintings, reflecting in words his visual expression. He also wrote several long autobiographical poems, such as "A Man in White," which recounts the trauma he experienced in 1355, when he made a surreptitious visit to his family estate in Wu-hsi and was arrested and jailed:

My white clothes stained,
A prisoner in public courtrooms.
Covered with wounds and confined,
My heart filled with fear.

Cruel officials behave like tigers:
They have no pity.
They treat people like swine,
Killing them, heaping abuse on them.

Though I conduct myself with propriety,
I know I have myself to blame.
Even considering the family property,
And my mother in homeless exile,
To linger and not stay away,
Is the cause of my sorrow.[49]

From 1356 to 1366, Ni Tsan and his family lived a life of "simple sustenance, harmony, and happiness" in the water country of Li-tse, at a place Ni nicknamed the Snail Hut—an allusion to its small size. In 1356, the rebel Chang Shih-ch'eng's forces seized Soochow. Ni Tsan repeatedly declined Chang's invitations to join his government. Chang's younger brother Chang Shih-hsin once sent Ni money and bolts of silk, only to have Ni tear up the silk and return the money. In anger, Chang had Ni arrested and severely beaten.

Ni Tsan's refusal to cooperate with the rebel leader reflects the serious moral dilemma faced by the late Yüan Confucian scholar. Although the Mongols were alien conquerors, they were recognized by Neo-Confucian scholars as legitimate rulers by virtue of their having unified China. To join the

rebel cause, though it meant liberating China from alien domination, was a violation of the Confucian code of ethics.[10] Ni Tsan's outstanding qualities are listed in *Biographies of Worthies of Chin-ling*, a work compiled in the 1550s:

> The recluse, in abandoning his fortune, showed heroism; in tearing up a gift of silk, he showed integrity; in safely preserving himself, he showed wisdom; and in refusing to serve in either war or peace, he showed singularity of conduct. . . . This he did not because he wanted to show his heroism, integrity, wisdom, or exceptional conduct, but because he was by nature independent and forthright.[11]

By early 1363, Ni Tsan's wife, Chiang Yüan-ming (Chi-chao), had died, and Ni appears to have been living alone.[12] In *Wind Among the Trees on the Riverbank* (pl. 117), dated 1363, Ni Tsan shows a desolate vision of neglected trees by the river's shore. Thinking of his wife, he writes in the inscription:

> On the riverbank the evening tide has fallen.
> The windy trees have but sparse, frozen leaves.
> Leaning on my staff I see the brushwood gate closed and silent.
> I think of her, while the mountain colors lightly flicker.

Although the absence of human presence reflects Ni Tsan's bereavement, the calligraphy (pl. 117a) displays a restored equilibrium. The verticals and horizontals are again set at right angles, the tight regular elements again balanced by the spreading clerical *na* strokes. The brushwork, combining tensile strength with suppleness, is executed with sureness and speed. The characters, typical of Ni's writing through the mid-1360s, are elongated and elegant.

Rendered in Tung Yüan's hemp-fiber idiom with a round, centered stroke, *Wind Among the Trees* simplifies the composition of *Enjoying the Wilderness* of 1339 (pl. 116). The reductive brushwork, rather than imposing a restrictive mode, offers an abstract language through which to evoke poetic expression. For Ni Tsan, landscape painting was pure brushwork. In a colophon dated 1364, he wrote,

> Calligraphy and painting work the same way. . . . It is said that a stroke of painting is just like a stroke of calligraphy. Each brushstroke must look backward and forward in a spirited manner, the stroke continuous, without breaking off. The people of the [Eastern] Tsin [317–420] and [Liu-]Sung [420–79] periods spoke of it this way.[13]

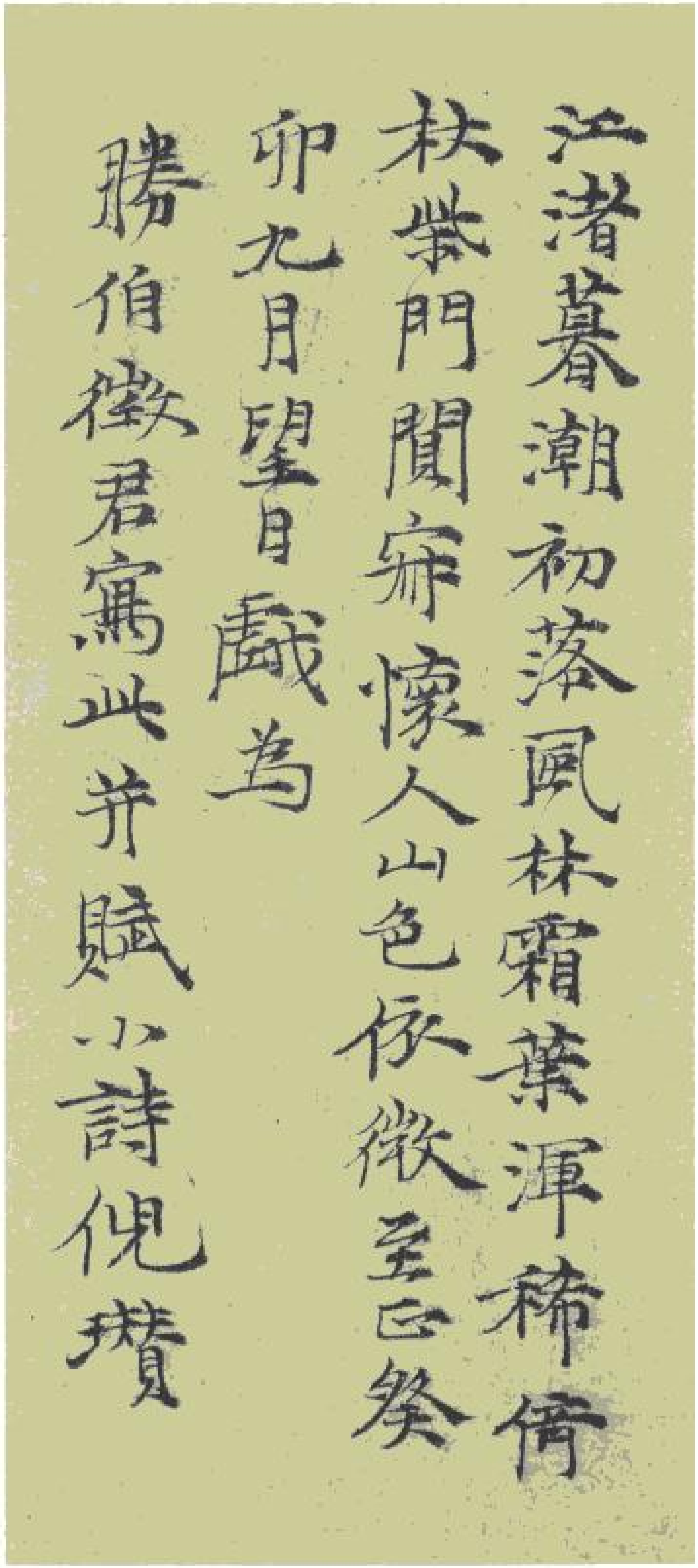
Having mastered realistic representation, Ni now sought to achieve *pu-ssu*, that which is "beyond likeness":

> I use bamboo painting only to write out the exceptional exhilaration in my breast, that is all. Why should I worry whether it shows likeness or not, whether the leaves are too dense or too sparse, or whether the branches are slanted or upright?[14]

The term *pu-ssu*, literally "not resembling" or "without likeness," assumed the positive connotation of being more than likeness when Ni Tsan applied it to the credo of the eighth-century landscape master Chang Tsao:



Pl. 117. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *Wind Among the Trees on the Riverbank*, dated 1363. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 23½ x 12½ in. (59 x 31 cm). Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr., 1988 (1989.363.39)



Pl. 117a. Detail, pl. 117

Reaching outward to imitate Creation,
And turning inward to master the mind.[55]

In *Wind Among the Trees,* Ni's slow cursive brushwork, though full of emotion and deep feeling, maintains an outward calm and balance.

By late 1366, with Soochow under siege, Ni Tsan was once again forced to abandon his home. In *River Pavilion, Mountain Colors* (fig. 198), painted early in 1368, soon after the establishment of the Ming dynasty, he shows an empty pavilion by a riverbank, symbolic of the home that awaits his return (fig. 197), though by that time, he no longer had a home to return to. His poem describes his lonely boat journey back toward the Lake T'ai region:

The sound of rain continues from the first into the second month.
Boats and paddles crowd the Wu River.
Spring melancholia grips me as in a drunken torpor,
As the waves, caught by wild winds, beat on my cabin windows.[56]

The brushwork, done in abrupt staccato movements, belies the apparent calm of the river scene. The artist's struggle to contain his emotions reminds us of one of his earlier poems:

If world affairs are like fire, my mind should be like water;
In my inner house I must remain my own master.[57]

Woods and Valleys of Yü-shan (pl. 118), dated early 1372, when Ni was visiting friends at Mount Yü, is a masterpiece of the artist's late work. The painting shows a complexity and monumentality not seen earlier. In the upper right, Ni's poem celebrates the hours he enjoyed with friends:

Ch'en Fan once prepared a bed
When Hsü Ju[-tzu] came to visit.
How sweet is the water from Yen [Tzu-]yu's well.
Yet Yü-chung's shrine is neglected and desolate.
We watch the clouds and daub with our brushes;
We drink wine and write poems.
The joyful feelings of this day
Will linger long after we have parted.

Compared with those in *The Six Gentlemen* (fig. 196), the five trees with varied foliage patterns stand contentedly together, in a lush valley richly textured with moss dots. The poem describing Ni's outing with his friends exemplifies the "harmonious, light, and peaceful [quality]" that Ni held as the ideal in poetry.[58] His late calligraphic style (pl. 118a) is similarly harmonious and self-assured, with regular and clerical elements brought gracefully into balance and with a steady, leisurely pace and abundance of detail that complement the newly discovered serenity and peace of his poetry and painting.

In his earlier paintings, Ni had favored the round hemp-fiber texture style of Tung Yüan. His later painting style displays a more varied approach. In the *Painting Manual,* attributed to Ni Tsan and dated 1350 (fig. 199), he writes:



Fig. 198. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *River Pavilion, Mountain Colors*, dated 1368. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 32⅛ x 13⅛ in. (81.6 x 33.4 cm). Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, on loan from the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection

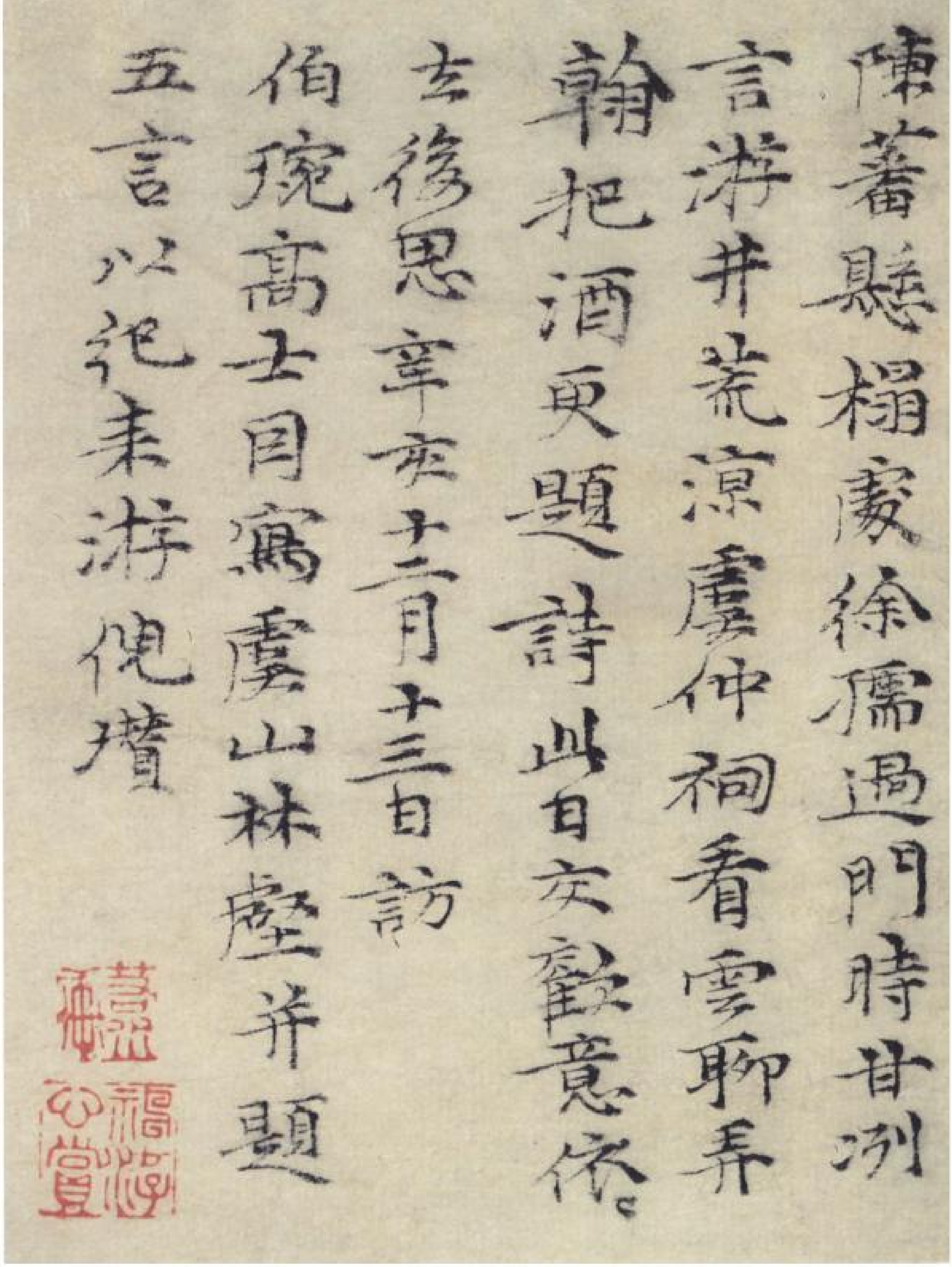
> The ancients used the ax-cut, the clove or T-shaped, the horse-teeth, and other kinds of texture methods. Some modern painters, unable to master all the methods, claiming that some of them have a vulgar, craftsmanlike quality, follow only the [ax-cut style of] Li T'ang and the draping hemp-fiber method [of Tung Yüan]. To try to follow the ancients and fail is to be twice a loser. In these two rocks I have used a combination of ancient and modern methods.[19]

The illustration that accompanies the above text shows two rocks, a rounded boulder at the lower left done in hemp-fiber strokes and an angular peak at the right done in ax-cut, T-shaped, and horse-teeth patterns. The forms are built with dry, blurred brushstrokes, creating a visually fused pictorial surface.



Pl. 118. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *Woods and Valleys of Yü-shan*, dated 1372. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 37½ x 14⅛ in. (94.3 x 35.9 cm). Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.8)

Pl. 118a. Ni Tsan (1301–1374). Detail from the artist's inscription on *Woods and Valleys of Yü-shan* (pl. 118)


陳蕃懸榻處徐孺過門時甘洌
言游井荒涼虞仲祠看雲聊弄
翰把酒更題詩此日交歡意依
玄後思辛亥十二月十三日訪
伯琬高士同寓虞山林壁并題
五言以紀來游倪瓚


涼處仲祠看雲聊弄
題詩此日欣歡意依
亥十二月十三日訪
因寫虞山林壑并題
來游倪瓚



Fig. 199. Unidentified artist (14th century), after Ni Tsan (1301–1374). *Painting Manual*, dated 1350. Leaf 7, "Angular Rocks." Album, ink on paper, each leaf 9¼ x 5⅝ in. (23.6 x 14.2 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Ni's *Woods and Valleys of Yü-shan*—which perhaps echoes the sharp-edged rocks of *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains* (pl. 15), attributed to Yen Wen-kuei, a work that Ni had inscribed in 1369—represents a synthesis of the two great traditions of Northern Sung landscape painting: the rocky landscape mode of Ching Hao, Kuan T'ung, and Fan K'uan and the earthen mode of Tung Yüan and Chü-jan (pl. 118b). In developing these forms, Ni combined the ax-cut, T-shaped, and hemp-fiber texture patterns in a new calligraphic brushwork that revitalized both the perception of nature and the perception of the past. Here, Ni worked slowly and patiently to achieve just the right tonal passages, creating an effect of tranquillity that is pure mood and poetry. The brushwork is both gentle and richly complex, projecting the image of a man of spirit and strength. Ni's friend the scholar Cheng Yüan-yu wrote:

> Master Ni paints as if he were carving a block of ice.
> Rid of the sediments, his work achieves a sublime purity.
> Cool streams, lean sandbars, nothing more.
> Stripped rocks and textured trees are filled with expression.
> Like a treasure of coral netted from the sea,

Pl. 118b. Detail, pl. 118

An immortal's plant springs suddenly to life.
Like imbibing wine without getting drunk,
Through his paintings one feels harmony with the universe.[60]

By the fourteenth century, Chinese painting had completed a full cycle of development, from the monumental landscape style and the history painting of the Northern and Southern Sung dynasties to the calligraphic self-expression of the late Yüan period. Sung representational art, proclamatory and demonstrative and serving state orthodoxy, had played a crucial role in the ritual affirmation of the imperial cult and the religious beliefs of the Confucian state. Yüan literati painting was, by contrast, a private art. Having lost their official function, Yüan literati artists turned to a more personal mode of expression, exploring the possibilities of abstraction and replacing forms that were essentially representational with forms that were essentially symbolic. Calligraphic brushwork, no longer subordinate to or concealed in representation, became its own statement of energy and rhythm, lending to landscape painting a new physicality and dynamism.

Socially and politically, the rise of the scholar-official aesthetic in the late Northern Sung, which laid the foundation for later literati painting, coincided with the schism within the Confucian state between the ruling imperial ideology and the humanist scholar-official philosophy. Although failing to bring about political and social reform through their utopian vision of archaic simplicity and balance, the scholar-official artists were able to effect artistic renewal through the study of the ancient masters. Then, during the late Yüan, literati painting, an outgrowth of scholar-official art, became the clarion voice of the Chinese artistic sensibility. But it died almost as soon as the imperial restoration policies of the Ming were under way in the early 1370s, as individualism was ruthlessly and systematically suppressed. Professional and court painting returned to favor, but court-sponsored art during the Ming never achieved the moral authority and cultural importance that it had held under the Sung.

By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the leading Sung and Yüan painting styles were perceived as a canon in the history of painting. Along with the early Northern Sung masters, the Four Masters of the late Yüan themselves became models to be emulated. The tension between orthodoxy and tradition, on the one hand, and individualism and change, on the other, became a central topic of debate. Ming painters, continuing to follow both the Sung and Yüan traditions, were unable to reconcile the different orientations of the two. While professional painters turned to the representational idiom of the Sung, the literati artists followed the calligraphic idiom of the Yüan.

Because of political repression, many of China's scholars and artists devoted themselves to safer subjects—art, archaeological research, and empirical textual studies. Ironically, the highly individualistic styles of the leading late Yüan masters were subverted and turned into a new pedagogic orthodoxy. During the late Ming, for example, with the threat of Manchu invasions on



Fig. 200. Shih-t'ao (1642–1707). *Landscape in the Style of Ni Tsan*, dated 1697. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 18½ x 12⅝ in. (47 x 32.2 cm). The Art Museum, Princeton University. Carl Otto von Kienbusch, Jr., Memorial Collection (1958-122)

China's northeastern border and growing moral and political decay at home, Ni Tsan, the most politically disengaged and eccentric of painters, was made into a cultural symbol of patriotism and moral regeneration, and his dry, spare style was widely imitated as a model of orthodox, official culture. And finally, during the Ch'ing dynasty, stultifying and lifeless imitation became a way of art.

Many great painters, however, throughout the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, rebelling against convention, continued to pursue antiquity as a source of spiritual enlightenment and truth. In Ni Tsan's simplicity of style and independence of spirit, the later individualist painters saw a source of freedom and the possibility of regeneration. The leading seventeenth-century individualist master, Shih-t'ao (1642–1707), for example, on his inspired *Landscape in the Style of Ni Tsan* (fig. 200), dated 1697, wrote:

> The paintings of the noble recluse Ni [Tsan] are like sands in the ocean surf and pebbles in the rapids. They turn and pour forward, as if born of nature. An air of spirited aloofness, pure and luxuriant, presses coolly on the beholder. But later imitators capture only the dry and desolate and melancholic feeling [of Ni's style], and their works are devoid of his far-reaching spirit.[61]

1. See Mi Fu, *Hua-shih* (History of Painting), in Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1973), vol. 2, p. 653.
2. See Chao Meng-fu, *Sung-hsüeh-chai wen-chi* (Collected Works of the Sung-hsüeh Studio [of Chao Meng-fu]), in *Li-tai hua-chia shih-wen chi* (A Collection of Poetry and Prose Writings by Painters) (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng Shu-chü, 1970), vol. 3, *chüan* 2, p. 94. For another translation, see Chu-tsing Li, "The Freer *Sheep and Goat* and Chao Meng-fu's Horse Paintings," *Artibus Asiae* 30, no. 4 (1968), pp. 312–13. For an illustration of one of the stone steeds from the Chao mausoleum, now in the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, see Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 4th ed. (New York: Abrams, 1982), p. 263.
3. See Han Yü, *Han Yü wen-hsüan* (Selected Essays by Han Yü), edited by T'ung Ti-te (Beijing: Jen-min Wen-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she, 1980), p. 236.
4. The poem was dated 1288; see Chao Meng-fu, *Sung-hsüeh-chai wen-chi*, *chüan* 2, p. 90.
5. For a different reading of the meaning of this image, see Jonathan Hay, "Khubilai's Groom," *Res* 17/18 (Spring/Autumn 1989), pp. 117–39.
6. See Chang Ch'ou, *Ch'ing-ho shu-hua-fang* (The Painting and Calligraphy Barge at Ch'ing-ho; preface dated 1616) (reprint, Taipei: Hsüeh-hai Shu-chü, 1975), vol. 10, p. 52b.
7. See Shih Shou-chien, "The *Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü*, by Chao Meng-fu," in Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, exhib. cat. (Princeton: Art Museum, 1984), pp. 238–54.
8. For the story of Hsieh K'un, see Richard B. Mather, trans., *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 253–54.
9. See Chu-tsing Li, *The Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains: A Landscape by Chao Meng-fu* (Ascona, Switz.: Artibus Asiae, 1965).
10. Wu Chen (1280–1354) states that he had studied and copied Tung Yüan's *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*. See Wu Chen, *Mei-tao-jen i-mo* (The Ink Legacy of Wu Chen), in *Mei-shu ts'ung-k'an* (A Compilation of Books on Fine Arts) (Taipei: Chung-hua Ts'ung-shu Pien-shen Wei-yüan-hui, 1964), vol. 2, p. 230.
11. This verse appears as a colophon datable to the 1310s on *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing. See *P'ei-wen-chai shu hua p'u* (Encyclopedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the P'ei-wen Studio; 1708), compiled by Wang Yüan-ch'i et al. (reprint, Taipei: Hsin-hsing Shu-chü Yu-hsien Kung-ssu, 1972), vol. 1, *chüan* 16, p. 335.
12. Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, translated and edited by Sir Henry Yule, 3d ed. revised by Henri Cordier (London: John Murray, 1903), vol. 2, p. 181.
13. According to Cheng Yüan-yu (1292–1364), a leading Soochow scholar, "the area of Wu supplies half of the provisions of the nation, and twenty-five percent of that comes from Ch'ang-chou [a district in Soochow Prefecture]." See Cheng Yüan-yu, *Ch'iao Wu chi* (Sojourn in Soochow), *Han-fen lou* ed. (reprint, Taipei: National Central Library, 1970), pp. 39b–40a.
14. See Frederick W. Mote, "The Rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330–1367," in Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 11–57.
15. See Wai-kam Ho, "Chinese Under the Mongols," in Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, eds., *Chinese Art Under the Mongols: The Yüan Dynasty (1279–1368)*, exhib. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), pp. 73–112; see also Yan-shuan Lao, "Southern Chinese Scholars and Educational Institutions in Early Yüan: Some Preliminary Remarks," in John D. Langlois, Jr., ed., *China Under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 107–33.
16. See Ch'en Kao-hua, ed., *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao* (Historical Source Materials on the Painters of the Yüan Dynasty) (Shanghai, 1980), pp. 371–90; and John Hay, "Huang Kung-wang's *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*, the Dimensions of a Landscape" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978).
17. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh* (Secrets of Landscape Painting); first recorded in T'ao Tsung-i, *Cho-keng lu* (Notes Written After Setting Aside the Plow); see Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 2, pp. 696–99. For an English translation, see James F. Cahill, *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yüan Dynasty, 1279–1368*, vol. 1 of *A History of Later Chinese Painting, 1279–1950* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), pp. 86–88.
18. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh*, in Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 2, p. 696.
19. Ibid., p. 697.
20. Ibid., p. 698.
21. See James F. Cahill, "Wu Chen: A Chinese Landscapist and Bamboo Painter of the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1958); and Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 403–8.
22. For the tradition of paintings of fishermen, see John Hay, "'Along the River During Winter's First Snow': A Tenth-Century Handscroll and Early Chinese Narrative," *Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 830 (May 1972), pp.

294–302. See also Li Shu-mei, "Yüan-ch'ao Wu Chen Yü-fu-t'u chih yen-chiu" (A Study of Fishermen Paintings by Wu Chen of the Yüan Dynasty) (Master's thesis, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 1985), especially pp. 106–8, 134–37.

23. See Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles; Part II, the Later Centuries*, vol. 4, *The Yüan and Early Ming Masters* (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), p. 73.

24. Translated by Laurence Sickman, in *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in the Collection of John M. Crawford, Jr.*, exhib. cat. (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1962), pp. 109–10.

25. See Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 409–19; and Chang Kuang-pin, *Yüan ssu-ta-chia* (Four Great Masters of the Yüan) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1975), pp. 27–32.

26. See David Sensabaugh, "Life at Jade Mountain: Notes on the Life of the Man of Letters in Fourteenth-Century Wu Society," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen* (Essays on Chinese Painting in Honor of Professor Suzuki Kei's Sixtieth Birthday) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1981), pp. 45–69.

27. See Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui-k'ao* (Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting; 1682) (reprint of the 1921 facsimile, Taipei: Cheng-chung Shu-chü, 1958), vol. 4, painting section, *chüan* 22, pp. 283–88.

28. The painting is the subject of a doctoral dissertation by Richard E. Vinograd, "Wang Meng's *Pien Mountains*: The Landscape of Eremitism in Later Fourteenth Century Chinese Painting" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1979); see also Vinograd, "Family Properties: Personal Context and Cultural Pattern in Wang Meng's *Pien Mountains* of 1366," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982), pp. 1–29.

29. See Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C. C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 154.

30. For Taoist images of the realm of the immortals, see Kiyohiko Munakata, "Mountains and Daoistic Images of the Immortals' Realm," in Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*, exhib. cat. (Urbana-Champaign: Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, 1991), pp. 111–72.

31. See Wang Yao-t'ing, "'The Land of Peach Blossoms' and 'A Recluse Angling on a Flowery Stream,'" in National Palace Museum, Taipei, *Abstracts of the International Colloquium on Chinese Art History, 1991* (Taipei, 1991), pp. 216–22.

32. The handscroll *Buddhist Temple in Autumn Mountains* (pl. 15), attributed to Yen Wen-kuei, bears colophons by Ni Tsan, Lu Kuang, and ten other fourteenth-century writers.

33. See Arthur Waley, trans., *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-chun, from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan, Recorded by His Disciple, Li Chih-ch'ang* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, [1931]).

34. See K'o-k'uan Sun, "Yü Chi and Southern Taoism During the Yüan Period," in Langlois, *China Under Mongol Rule*, pp. 211–53.

35. See Chiang I-han, "Yüan-mo Ming-ch'u yü-shih hua-chia Teng Yü chi ch'i Chu-shih-t'u chih yen-chiu" (Teng Yü: A Late Fourteenth-Century Taoist Painter and His *Bamboo and Rock*), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1973), pp. 49–85.

36. Ibid., pp. 63, 71.

37. See the biography of Fang Ts'ung-i by Chu-tsing Li, in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 435–38; and Mary Gardner Neill, "Mountains of the Immortals: The Life and Painting of Fang Ts'ung-i" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1981).

38. Kiyohiko Munakata, drawing on research by Li-juan Lin in her graduate paper, "The Myth of Elixir Light in Mao-shan: A Study of Three Paintings of the Late Yüan," University of Illinois, 1989, speculates that Lu Kuang's painting illustrates the sacred Taoist mountain Mao-shan, at Chü-jung, Kiangsu Province; see Munakata, "Mountains and Daoistic Images," p. 117.

39. See Richard E. Vinograd, "New Light on Tenth-Century Sources for Landscape Painting Styles of the Late Yüan Period," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki-kinen*, pp. 3–30.

40. See Chiang I-han, "Ming-ch'u yü-shih hua-chia Wu Po-li chi ch'i Ch'iao-sung-t'ing-yün-t'u" (A Taoist Scholar-Painter of the Early Ming: Wu Po-li and His *Pine and Rock*), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1974), pp. 51–62.

41. See Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush* (Ascona, Switz.: Artibus Asiae, 1974), p. 11.

42. For a discussion of Chinese geomantic practices (*feng-shui*), see Hay, "Huang Kung-wang's *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*," pp. 269ff.

43. For modern studies on Ni Tsan, see Huang Miao-tzu, "Tu Ni Yün-lin chuan cha-chi" (Notes on Reading Ni Tsan's Biography), in *Chung-hua wen-shih lun-ts'ung* (Collected Essays on Chinese Literature and History), 3d ser. (Beijing: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1962), pp. 247–72; Wang Chi-ch'ien, "Ni Yün-lin sheng-p'ing chi shih-wen" (The Life and Writings of Ni Tsan), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 1, no. 2 (October 1966), pp. 29–42; and Wang Chi-ch'ien, "Ni Yün-lin chih hua" (The Paintings of Ni Tsan), *Ku-kung chi-k'an* 1, no. 3 (January 1967), pp. 15–46; see also the

biography and chronology of Ni Tsan in Chang Kuang-pin, *Yüan ssu-ta-chia*, pp. 20–27, 87–198; and Ch'en Kao-hua, *Yüan-tai hua-chia shih-liao*, pp. 451–82.

44. Another painting by Ni Tsan in the Tung Yüan idiom is *Shui-chu chü* (Dwelling Among Water and Bamboo), dated 1343, in the Beijing Municipal Collection; see Susan E. Nelson, "Rocks Beside a River: Ni Tsan and the Ching-Kuan Style in the Eyes of Seventeenth-Century Critics," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980), p. 77, fig. 11.
45. See Chang Tuan, *Epitaph of Yün-lin, Master Ni*, in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi* (Collected Works of the Pure and Secluded Pavilion [of Ni Tsan]; 1713), in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an* (Collection of Rare Books from the Yüan Dynasty) (reprint, Taipei: Kuo-li Chung-yang T'u-shu-kuan, 1970), vol. 10, *chüan* 11, p. 495.
46. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh*, in Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien*, vol. 2, p. 697.
47. Ni Tsan, "Wei Fang Yai hua shan chiu ti" (Inscription After Painting a Landscape for Fang Yai), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 2, p. 69.
48. Ni Tsan, "Cho-i-chai shih-kao hsü" (Preface to the Collected Poems of the Cho-i Studio [by Chou Cheng-tao]; 1373), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 10, p. 440.
49. Ni Tsan, "Chih-cheng i-wei su-i-shih" (Chih-cheng Era, I-wei Year [1355], Poem on *A Man in White*), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 1, p. 31.
50. See Richard L. Davis, "Historiography as Politics in Yang Wei-chen's *Polemic on Legitimate Succession*," *T'oung Pao* 69 (1983), pp. 33–72. Ni Tsan, faced with such a dilemma, could maintain his higher moral principles only by remaining unaligned and uninvolved in politics.
51. "Chin-ling ch'ung-ssu hsien-hsien chuan" (Biographies of Worthies of Chin-ling), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 11, p. 498.
52. See Ni Tsan, "T'i Chi-chao Chiang-chün i-hsiang" (Poems for the Portrait of [Ni Tsan's] Deceased [Wife] Chiang Yüan-ming; with preface), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 7, p. 335.
53. See Chang Kuang-pin, *Yüan ssu-ta-chia*, pl. 323. Ni Tsan derives his ideas from Ku K'ai-chih's observation that figures in paintings must answer to and look at one another; see Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi* (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties; completed 847), in Yü An-lan, ed., *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* (Compendium of Painting Histories) (Shanghai: Jen-min Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-she, 1963), vol. 1, *chüan* 5, p. 71.
54. See Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 9, p. 428.
55. See the biography of Chang Ts'ao, in Chang Yen-yüan, *Li-tai ming-hua chi*, in Yü An-lan, *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu*, vol. 1, *chüan* 10, p. 121.
56. For two other versions of the poem, see Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 8, pp. 362, 393.
57. Ni Tsan, "Shun-ni" (Fair or Foul), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 8, p. 352.
58. Ni Tsan, "Cho-i-chai shih-kao hsü," in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 10, p. 440.
59. See National Palace Museum (and National Central Museum), Taipei, *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* (The National Palace Museum Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1956), vol. 4, *chüan* 6, p. 21.
60. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, in *Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an*, vol. 10, *chüan* 12, p. 522.
61. See Wen C. Fong, "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 25, no. 2/3 (1962), pp. 113–15.

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Compiled by Robert Palmer

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